



Review of
the impact of the
**Scottish Schools
(Parental Involvement)
Act 2006**

conducted by the National Parent Forum of Scotland

parent children government
national scottish framework
education councils
schools improvement
involvement home learning
important representation
local opportunity home
implementation
scotland forum issues
views continues wider
involving providing
responsibilities recognising
partners community
educators organisations
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represent together shared
authorising plan help

Foreword

As Chair of the National Parent Forum of Scotland, I want Scotland's parents and Parent Councils to continue to get the support they need to help their children and their schools. Although parents have achieved a great deal and we have much to be proud of, we cannot rest on our laurels. There is more to be done.



This Review has been an opportunity to take stock, and to look inwards at how the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) (2006) legislation fits with today's educational, political, economic and demographic landscape. We have also looked outwards, to examples around the world, to ensure that Scotland remains at the forefront of best international practice.

When the Act was introduced, it gave Scotland a model for parental involvement that was about far more than representation. The Act recognised the diversity of parents in Scotland. It took into account that some parents needed support to help their child at home, but that other parents were able to give up their own time to help their school and the education of all children. This blended approach led to the current legislation and guidance.

We should be proud of Scotland's unique and diverse approach. It represents the values of the families of Scotland. Many parents have been working hard to do what they can over the past ten years of the Act, in Parent Councils, in schools and at home. This has been during a period when both education and Scotland itself have been changing rapidly; therefore, it is right and timely that we should review the Act ten years on.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland hopes that this Review will allow all of us to move forward together, and continue to keep parents at the heart of their child's learning. I will continue to strive for a political and legislative environment which champions the voice of parents. Scotland's National Improvement Framework and the Improvement Plan for Scottish Education strive for 'excellence and equity', and I want no less for Scotland's parents.

Joanna Murphy.

Joanna Murphy
Chair



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Executive summary

As the key national organisation representing parents in Scottish education, we felt the tenth anniversary of the Act was an excellent time to reflect on the impact of the legislation. We look forward to working with stakeholders following this Review to further the parental involvement agenda in Scotland.

Iain Ellis, Past Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland

Background

There are several key themes in the [2016-17 Programme for Government](#). These include: empowering people and communities; raising standards in schools; closing the attainment gap; having an education system that provides opportunities for all; and delivering opportunities to young people regardless of their family background.

Why conduct a review of the impact of the Parental Involvement Act (2006)?

Supporting parents is key in raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The results of parental involvement can be catalysts for change across social, educational and economic policy areas. Parents, children and families should be at the heart of policies and the political agenda. Integrating parental involvement into policies and strategies to raise attainment, ensure cross-departmental outcomes and narrow the gap between the lowest and highest achievers is key in driving this agenda forward.

Approach to the task

In producing this Review and collating the findings, the National Parent Forum of Scotland and Ipsos MORI conducted interviews with parents, stakeholders and headteachers and considered national and international research evidence. A call for evidence was issued to parents, Parent Council members and stakeholders.

The Review

This Review considers the available evidence on the impact of the Parental Involvement Act (2006) across Scotland. It considers the effectiveness of the Parent Council role, the progress made by local authorities and the extent to which parents are informed and involved in their child's school and education. Examples of what makes a difference are contained in this Review, along with areas for improvement and recommendations on how to drive the parental involvement agenda forward.

Conclusions

The key message from the Review is that parental involvement in a child's learning has positive outcomes for the child, their family and their school, and helps to raise attainment. Recommendations for Scottish ministers, strategic leaders and practitioners have emerged from this Review.

Moving forward

Increasing parental involvement remains a significant focus for all. There are a number of key messages and recommendations from this Review that stakeholders should take forward. Recommendations for Scottish ministers, strategic leaders, researchers and practitioners are contained in Section 10. The key messages that have emerged from this Review are listed below.

STRATEGIC

- The Parental Involvement Act (2006) has helped to support a step-change in the quality of parental involvement across Scotland, building on the good practice that happened in pockets around the country.
- There is a desire to: update and improve key aspects of the Act; develop fresh guidance; update the 'Engaging Parents and Families' toolkit; and develop further advice and information for parents on Parentzone Scotland.
- There is no desire for additional statutory decision-making powers to be assigned to Parent Councils.
- Considerable support exists for clarifying the current statutory duties on headteachers and for modernising the relevant duties of Parent Councils.
- Work is required on the 'learning at home' strand of the Act, as well as on clarification of what it is and what it can be.
- Greater promotion of family learning is required.

OPERATIONAL

- The role and function of Parent Councils need to be more clearly defined, protected and promoted.
- Levels of financial and other support for Parent Councils need to be consistent and at a level that actively supports joint-working between schools and families.
- Parent Councils need more understanding of the legal responsibilities placed on them and local authorities, regarding equalities and diversity requirements.
- The Scottish education workforce requires to be developed and equipped to work with parents and families. Practitioners need training to help them develop the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to work with parents.
- There should be protection and promotion of local authority resources used to drive forward the parental involvement agenda and support Parent Councils.



1

Purpose

This Review examines the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. It was undertaken by the National Parent Forum of Scotland to inform the Scottish Government and Education Scotland. Particular attention was paid to how policy and practice on parental involvement have evolved since the Act was passed in 2006.

The term 'parents' in this document includes guardians and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act (1995), or has care of a child or young person.

'Corporate parenting' is defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) as 'the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked-after children, young people and care-leavers'.

For the purposes of support for children and families, 'child' means a person under the age of 18 years. 'Family', in relation to a child, includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child and any other person with whom the child has been living (Children (Scotland) Regulations, 1995).

All parents who have a child attending a public school are automatically members of the parent forum for that school. The parent forum may be represented by a body known as a Parent Council.

The Parental Involvement Act (2006) makes provision for Parent Councils to play an active role in supporting parental involvement in the work and life of the school, while also giving parents opportunities to express their views on their child's education and learning.

2

Context



Parental involvement is about supporting pupils and their learning. It is about parents and teachers working together in partnership to help children become more confident learners.

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance (2006)

The Bill for the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act was passed by Parliament on 10 May 2006 and received Royal Assent on 14 June 2006.



2.1 BACKGROUND

The Act followed engagement with several key education partners. Provisions are made in the Act for the involvement of parents in their child's education and in school life generally.

It aims to achieve the involvement of parents across three priority areas:

Learning at home

Recognising the vital role that parents and other carers play in children's learning and development.

Home/school partnerships

Reflecting the shared role and responsibility that schools, parents and the community have in working together to educate children.

Parental representation

Providing 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 children.

The Act imposed a duty on local authorities to develop and implement a parental involvement strategy. [Guidance](#) was published by the Scottish Executive for local authorities to prepare their strategy, set out their policies for parental involvement and establish a scheme for promoting and supporting Parent Councils.

Within the Act, there is provision for Parent Councils to play an active role in supporting parental involvement in the work and life of the school, while also giving parents opportunities to express their views on children's education and learning. The guidance published by the Scottish Executive, as mentioned above, aimed to provide information to Parent Councils on their role and how these functions could be carried out effectively.

Following on from the Act, the [National Parenting Strategy](#), launched in 2012, highlights the positive impact parents can have on their child's development and health and wellbeing. The strategy aims to strengthen the practical help and support available to parents to equip them to raise their child and ultimately make this an even more rewarding experience.

Within this context, the National Parent Forum of Scotland, in consultation with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and stakeholders, conducted a Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. It is supported by, and has run parallel to, independent national evidence gathered by Ipsos MORI on the benefits and impacts of parental involvement. The Review will help to inform future policy direction with a view to improving outcomes for children through increasing parental involvement. The findings from this Review will be shared with Scottish ministers, the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, local authorities, stakeholders, schools and practitioners and parents to influence future policy recommendations and the direction of parental involvement in children's learning.

The landscape in Scotland has changed significantly since 2006 across the population, education, pupil numbers and policy frameworks. Current policy documents increasingly refer to 'parental engagement' rather than 'parental involvement'. However, given that the scope of this report was to review the impact of the Parental Involvement Act, the term 'parental involvement' will mostly be used throughout.

The definition of 'parental involvement' used in the Review is:

'Parental involvement is about supporting pupils and their learning. It is about parents and teachers working together in partnership to help children become more confident learners.'

From [Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act Guidance \(2006\)](#)

2.2 REVIEW OF POLICY

The Scottish Government has introduced several policy changes since 2006. A more detailed policy mapping overview is provided in Appendix A. Further information is also contained in the national evidence gathered by Ipsos MORI in its report '[Research to Inform the Review of the Impact of the 2006 Parental Involvement Act](#)' (2017).

The overarching framework in Scotland is '[Getting It Right For Every Child](#)' (GIRFEC). Involving parents as partners in their children's learning is embedded throughout GIRFEC. The framework also aims to ensure that all children have the 'chance to grow into responsible adults who can contribute to Scottish life, as future parents, employees, leaders and teachers'. Different priorities in different local authorities have meant that certain policies have received more attention than others in different parts of the country. However, the Scottish Government's current policies and strategies are heavily focused on raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

3

Why conduct a review of the impact of the Parental Involvement Act (2006)?

It is over ten years since the Parental Involvement Act became law. During this time, schools and local authorities have been provided with several wide-ranging frameworks.

Given that policy and practice have evolved considerably since 2006, Scottish ministers requested that the legal and policy landscape on parental involvement be revisited.



On 16 November 2015, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning announced that the National Parent Forum of Scotland would conduct a review into the impact of the Act and the surrounding policy framework on involving and engaging parents.

The Review would:



This Review will help to reinforce the Scottish Government's objective of enhancing parental involvement and developing fresh approaches ten years on from the initial legislation being passed. Additionally, Scottish ministers will consider the evidence emerging from the Review to help inform the ongoing development and implementation of the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education.

3.1 WHAT IS PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT?

'Parents and families are a critically important part of a child's learning and development.'

Save the Children (2013)

The term 'parental involvement' is not clearly or consistently defined in literature.

It has been described as:

representing many different parental behaviours; parenting practices such as parental aspirations for their child's academic achievement; parental communication with their children about school; parental participation in school activities; parental communications with teachers about their child; and parental rules at home which are considered to be education-related.

Harris and Goodall (2007)

The range of definitions implies

that parental involvement is: multifaceted in nature, because parental involvement subsumes a wide variety of parental behavioural patterns and parenting practices.

Harris and Goodall (2007)

'Parental involvement' and 'parental engagement' can also be confused. Goodall and Montgomery (2014) consider parental engagement as active involvement in learning. Such learning can take place in a variety of settings including early-learning and childcare settings, schools, the community, through family learning and learning at home. Parental engagement represents a greater 'commitment, ownership of action' than parental involvement within educational settings such as early-learning and childcare settings or schools.

Examples of Involvement/Engagement

Parental involvement with schools

- Reading in class
- Going on trips
- Parents' evenings



Parental involvement with schooling

- Helping with homework
- Keeping track of coursework



Parental engagement with children's learning

- Active involvement in learning
- Focus on the relationship between parents and their children's learning
- Moral support and encouragement
- Guidance and advice



Ideally, parental involvement leads to parental engagement. The movement between the two represents a 'shift in emphasis, away from the relationship between parents and schools, to a focus on the relationship between parents and their children's learning' (Goodall and Montgomery, 2014).

Key research by Dr Joyce Epstein has identified six types of involvement for schools, families and communities as they work together to increase attainment. The role of a parent body such as a Parent Council in representing the views of parents and making decisions on their behalf is one of these, but is no more or less important than the others (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al, 2002). Each is equally valuable and relevant, and may be more or less appropriate at different points in the school career of a young person.

Six types of involvement

Parenting

Help families to create home environments to support children as students, including family support programmes, home visits and parent education.

Communicating

Communicate with families about school programmes and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

Volunteering

Improve recruitment, training, work and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at school or in other locations to support students and school programmes.

Learning at home

Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.

Decision-making

Include families as participants in school decisions, governance and advocacy through parent-teacher associations (PTA), parent-teacher organisations (PTO), school councils, committees, action teams and other parent organisations.

Collaborating with the community

Co-ordinate resources and services for students, families and the school with businesses, agencies and other groups, and provide services to the community.

3.2 HOW DOES PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT HELP IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN?

Evidence from research continues to demonstrate the importance of parental involvement in raising attainment and improving outcomes for children, families and schools. Parental involvement and aspirations shape children's and young people's achievements. In recent years, schools have increasingly recognised the importance of involving parents.

The more that parents engage in their child's learning, the more likely it is that they will help raise their child's attainment. What parents do with their children at home and throughout their education is much more significant than any other factor open to educational influence (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). Parental and family engagement has a greater influence on children's and young people's attainment than their socio-economic background, parents' educational attainment, family structure or ethnicity. Research on school effectiveness also consistently shows parental engagement to be one of the key factors in securing higher achievement (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). It is therefore vitally important that parents and families are continually supported to understand and fulfil their crucial role in shaping and supporting their children's learning aspirations and attainment.

Effective parental involvement programmes are among the interventions that can help to close the attainment gap associated with pupils from economically disadvantaged households. Such programmes focus on helping parents to use appropriate strategies to support their child's learning at home (Ellis and Sosu, 2014).

The Parental Involvement Act (2006) as it currently stands is only statutory during school years. Since the law was passed, Scottish Education has introduced a 3–18 curriculum. Although the Act only applies to the schools sector, the principles enshrined within it are valid for all sectors of education.

Research has shown that around 80% of the difference in how well children do at school depends on what happens outside the school gates (Rabash et al, 2010; Save the Children, 2013). Children's learning journey begins before they start school and they continue to learn at home and in the community. The role that parents play in providing learning opportunities at home and linking with educational settings is therefore critical. Participating in and facilitating learning experiences and activities outwith school make parents an important contributor to their child's learning (Emerson et al, 2012).

Parental involvement in children's learning is well documented, as are the barriers that stop some parents becoming involved. These barriers can be tackled by several different approaches (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). Family learning is one such approach. It is a powerful tool that can challenge educational disadvantage, promote socio-economic resilience and foster positive attitudes towards lifelong learning (Scottish Family Learning Network, 2016). For many families, opportunities for family learning allow them to develop positive relationships with educators that can lead to greater ongoing involvement in their child's education.

Family learning programmes are generally understood to be those which aim to encourage adults and children to learn together. They include opportunities for intergenerational learning and, wherever possible, lead both adults and children to pursue further learning. Family learning programmes can also be those which are specifically designed to enable parents to increase their skills to support their children's learning. Evidence shows family learning to be effective in promoting and facilitating increased parental participation and engagement with schools (Mackenzie, 2010). Further information on the benefits of family learning can be found in the [Review of Family Learning \(2016\)](#).



3.3 REVIEW OF NATIONAL EVIDENCE

Taking stock, celebrating success, scrutinising the impact of the legislation and identifying areas where parental involvement can be improved are all crucial for Scottish education.

This Review will aim to address the following questions:

- 1 What progress have schools and local authorities made in implementing the 2006 Act?
- 2 How have the landscape, practice and approaches to parental involvement evolved since 2006?
- 3 How effective are Parent Councils?
- 4 To what extent are parents informed by and involved with their school and engaged in their child's learning?

In addition to addressing these questions, this Review is supported and has run parallel to independent national research undertaken by Ipsos MORI. The data was gathered by a variety of methods to allow the nature and scale of people's experiences of the Act to be explored.

It comprised the following three strands:

- **Desk research** – a literature review and mapping exercise to gather information about the implementation of the Act across local authorities.
- **A telephone survey** of 502 parents across Scotland to look at: the ways schools communicate with parents; frequency of communications; ways in which parents get involved with schools; and awareness of the Parent Council and the wider parent forum at their child's school.
- **Qualitative interviews** with headteachers, Parent Councils and other parents from four case-study schools.

The full set of findings from Ipsos MORI's research can be found in its [report](#), but the key points are summarised on the next page.

Key highlights

Local authority parental involvement strategy mapping

Substantial variation between the approaches of the different local authorities was found in terms of the publicly available documentation and information related to parental involvement. While local authorities followed the 2006 guidelines, very few of the strategies available online were up to date, had details of how or when they would be reviewed, had evidence of parent consultation or had clear objectives.

Communications with parents

Overall, parents were satisfied with the type and level of communication they received from their child's school and were generally positive about the move to modern communication methods. Parents preferred direct communication and would like more information on the topics their child is learning and how these are taught. However, parents felt schools were not engaging in meaningful consultation.

Learning at home

There was confusion and a general lack of understanding among parents and staff about the difference between homework and the concept of learning at home. Learning at home was also identified by headteachers as an area for further development.

Home/school partnerships

Parents felt more comfortable getting involved in wider school activities through traditional avenues such as parents' evenings, school concerts and fundraising events than they did through learning activities. Parents with children at primary school were more likely to get involved than those whose young people were in the secondary sector. Invitations from the school were not always taken up, especially if these were focused on learning and teaching.

Parental representation

Parents were generally aware of Parent Councils and their role in fundraising. Less was known about the role of Parent Councils in supporting parental involvement in children's learning or the recruitment of senior school staff.



3.4 SUMMARY

Current national and international research on parental involvement has been considered in the writing of this Review, but it is recognised that parental involvement in its widest sense, such as the engagement of parents with their children in day-to-day activities, and the resultant impact on children's learning, was not considered. It is also recognised that further evidence could be obtained through consultation with a wider range of practitioners or more in-depth research with children and young people.

Following, are the key messages that have emerged from the national evidence gathered by Ipsos MORI which are of relevance to Scottish ministers, strategic leaders, practitioners and parents. These are provided in more detail in the report by Ipsos MORI.

Key messages (From independent national research by Ipsos MORI)

- Parents would benefit from support to help them become more comfortable in engaging with learning activities.
- Local authorities need to be clear on the purpose and role of parental involvement when communicating with schools.
- Further work is required to engage parents across the secondary years.
- Practitioners are required at local authority level and school level to develop a strategy and communicate with Parent Councils.
- Parents (including non-resident parents) are not always aware of or provided with information about the opportunities available to them.
- Practitioners are further required to deliver training or tailored programmes specifically for parents to build the capacity of parents and promote their involvement in their child's learning.
- The definition of 'learning at home' is not widely understood.
- School staff require training on many aspects of parental involvement. Training could come through continuous professional development. Future staff could receive this training during initial teacher education programmes.
- There is a need to raise awareness of the role and function of Parent Councils.
- Further evidence is required on the impact of parental involvement strategies at a local level.
- Time is perceived as the biggest barrier by parents who would like to be more involved in school life.
- Parental involvement strategies should be easier to access and easier to understand.
- Parents prefer direct methods of communication.
- More guidance and support is required on encouraging parents from diverse and cultural backgrounds to join Parent Councils.
- As already identified in the [National Improvement Framework](#), further monitoring is required of levels of parental involvement and engagement in and satisfaction with learning provision in different communities.

4

Methods

This section outlines the methods used by this Review to study the impact of the Parental Involvement Act (2006). It has been structured around the different stages of the Review process.



4.1 REFERENCE GROUP

The National Parent Forum of Scotland engaged with key stakeholders across the country to form a reference group who would act as a sounding board for the various stages of the Review. The reference group met throughout the project. Membership of the reference group can be found in Appendix B.

4.2 COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

Following a tender process, Ipsos MORI was commissioned by the National Parent Forum of Scotland to undertake independent research to inform this Review.

4.3 REVIEW OF POLICY

A review of policy relating to parental involvement was carried out in consultation with the Scottish Government. The purpose of the review of policy was to obtain an overview of the most relevant policies to be considered in this report in relation to parental involvement. These encompassed social, education and economic policies and strategies.

The national evidence gathered by Ipsos MORI separately collated data on parental involvement strategies within local authorities. Although consideration has been given to the impact of the Parental Involvement Act (2006) through local authority strategies (in consultation with Scottish parental involvement officers), the complexity of the landscape meant this could not be scrutinised within the remit of this report.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

Interview questions and questionnaires:

To ensure consistency, a set of questions was used as a guide to conduct all interviews and to obtain responses from questionnaires. The questions for the interviews and questionnaires focused on the three priority areas of the Parental Involvement Act (2006). These were: learning at home; home/school partnerships; and parental representation. Questionnaires were broken down into sections primarily to gather background information before going on to ask questions on specific topics.

Questions for parents considered:

opportunities to get involved; current involvement; methods of communication; knowledge of Parent Council/parent-teacher association/parent group within own school and current involvement; awareness of the functions of the Parent Council; effectiveness of the Parent Council/parent-teacher association/parent group; supporting learning at home; supporting parents to become involved.

Questions for Parent Councils considered:

effectiveness of the Parent Council; relationship between the wider parent forum, Parent Council and school senior management; recruitment of senior school staff; communications with the wider parent forum; promotion of parental involvement in the life of the school and at home.

Questions for headteachers considered:

local authority prioritisation and encouragement of parental involvement; support from local authorities to take parental involvement forward; parental involvement strategy; effectiveness of the Parent Council; effectiveness of the parental involvement process; recruitment of senior school staff; promotion of parental involvement nationally and locally; definitions of parental involvement and parental engagement; training for teaching staff; barriers to parental communication; policy approaches to parental involvement; what works; what effective parental involvement looks like.

Questions for stakeholders considered:

impact on learning at home, home/school partnerships and parental representation; effectiveness of Parent Councils; recruitment of senior school staff; what works; policy approaches to parental involvement.

Call for evidence

A 'call for evidence' was made available for a period of seven weeks via the National Parent Forum of Scotland [website](#) and the Scottish Government's consultation website. Notification about the call for evidence was issued by email to stakeholders across national parenting organisations, Parent Councils, parents, members of the public, to every school in Scotland and promoted through social media channels. Responses to the set questions could be completed via the online survey, paper copy or email.

Respondents

The call for evidence received over 1,200 responses from parents. Of these:

- 83% of respondents were mothers, 16% were fathers and the remaining 1% were grandparents or other family members.
- The majority of respondents had a child in primary school (72%).
- 39% of respondents were involved in a Parent Council, 13% in a parent-teacher association and 9% in a parent group.

A separate questionnaire was also sent to every school in Scotland with a request that this be forwarded to the Parent Council. In total, 461 responses were received, of which 350 were complete.

Interviews with set questions were held with a targeted group of 12 headteachers in seven local authorities across Scotland. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

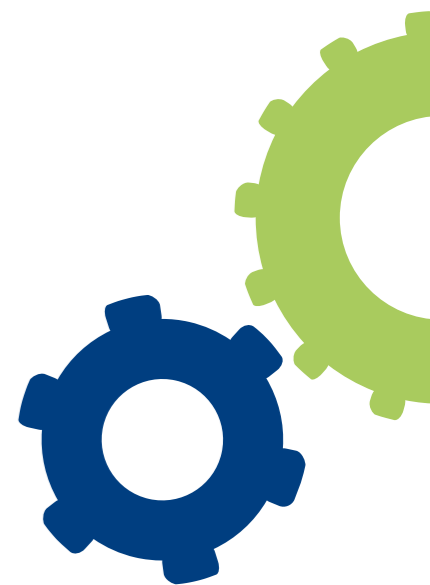
Key stakeholders, professionals and teaching staff working in organisations with education as part of their remit responded to the call for evidence. Overall, 86 responses were received via the online survey and a further ten by email.

Additionally, two focus groups were held with parents from a minority ethnic background. There were ten parents in attendance across the two focus groups.

Lastly, two focus groups were held with representatives of the National Parent Forum of Scotland.

4.5 SUMMARY

The national evidence gathering by Ipsos MORI and the various strands of this Review have helped provide the background context as well as key messages and recommendations for the future policy direction of parental involvement in Scotland. These are given in more detail in Section 10.



5

What does excellent parental involvement look like?



What parents do is more important than who parents are.

Sylva et al (2004)




Desforges and Abouchar (2003) suggest parents are involved 'to the degree they see that supporting and enhancing their child's school achievement is part of their "job" as a parent'. Parents will also get involved 'to the degree they feel they have the capacity to make a difference'.

Defining excellent parental involvement can be complex

There is no research-based evidence that attainment is increased by parents being involved in school trips or events, or through greater school governance (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003). The 'key context for parental impact on school outputs' is, according to Desforges and Abouchar, in the home. Similar views are held by Sylva et al (2004), who consider:

the quality of the home learning environment [to be] more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income.

 The greatest impact of parental involvement can come from the 'modelling of values and expectations, through encouragement and through interest in and respect for the child-as-learner'.

Desforges and Abouchar (2003)

Support for parental engagement

A wide range of third-sector organisations and groups work to support the agenda of raising attainment through promoting parental engagement, disseminating information and building the capacity of parents. These organisations and groups have different but complementary roles which provide benefits to parents and young people regarding children's learning. These groups are represented in the National Parental Engagement Steering Group, whose membership is listed in Appendix B.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland is part of the National Parental Engagement Steering Group, and works closely with the other members of the group.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland gives Parent Councils and parents an opportunity to discuss and raise educational issues of mutual interest or concern at a national level. The Forum has a membership made up of volunteer parent representatives from every local authority area in Scotland.



How Good Is Our School? (4th edition), (HGIOS4), is the set of quality indicators currently used in school inspections

HGIOS4 supports staff to scrutinise their work and evaluate what is working well and what could be better. The document focuses on increasing the positive impact of working with parents and families to improve learning and achievement. Emphasis is placed on schools working in partnership with others in the community to support parents and families to secure better outcomes for children and young people.

Within HGIOS4, the following are all features of highly effective practice:

- All staff, pupils, parents and partners are fully involved in improving the life and work of the school.
- A range of stakeholders take lead roles in aspects of school improvement; this includes children and young people, parents and partners.
- Parents have regular opportunities to support improvement by participating in a range of formal and informal activities.
- Pupils, parents, partners and staff are all involved in the creation and ongoing review of the vision, aims and values of the school.
- Recruitment arrangements are outlined clearly in policy and procedures documents and take appropriate account of parental involvement legislation.
- Children and young people and their parents/carers are fully involved in decisions about how their needs will be met.
- Children, young people and their parents/carers are actively involved in planning transitions.
- Partnership work with stakeholders – including parents/carers, the local community, third sector, public sector and business organisations – is based on mutual trust and respect.
- The school consistently involves parents/carers in shaping policy and services to improve impacts.
- Staff support parents/carers to actively engage in their children's learning, attainment and achievement.
- All parents/carers are fairly represented by the Parent Council and any views or complaints are acted upon in an effective and timely manner.
- Creative approaches are used to engage families.
- Staff have an appropriate shared understanding of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and use these approaches to meet the needs of families.

Research considers what effective parental involvement looks like to practitioners, but this can look different from the perspective of parents. Partnership working requires an investment of time to build relationships. The diverse range, culture and complexities of parents and families from different backgrounds means that effective parental involvement will have a range of timescales, meanings and tailored requirements.

6

What progress have schools and local authorities made in implementing the 2006 Act?

Over three-quarters (76%) of the parents who responded said they had been given the opportunity to be included in their child's education and 84% had been given help to get involved in the school community.

The majority of respondents considered it important to know how their child was doing (78%) and believed that school staff did this in a way that they could understand (77%). Respondents stated that their opinions were asked for (67%) but only half felt that staff talked to them in a way that would suit everyone (51%).





6.1 LEARNING AT HOME

Responses from practitioners and stakeholders concerning the home/school partnership varied. Some respondents had had a positive experience of home/school partnerships as a result of the legislation, but others felt the Act had brought forth limited or no impact.

Positive impacts of the Act on home/school partnerships

The greatest impact of the Parental Involvement Act was considered to be the way in which schools were now more open and transparent with parents. This in turn had resulted in:

- Parents having greater involvement in their child's learning.
- Schools creating opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning.
- Schools engaging with parents to support the delivery of the curriculum.
- An improved relationship between schools and parents.

The role of Parent Councils was perceived to be beneficial to home/school partnerships in improving communications between parents and schools.

However, some respondents considered home/school partnerships to be successful because of their school's efforts rather than as a direct result of the Parental Involvement Act.

Limitations of the Act

Impact of the Act on home/school partnerships

- Variability in the number of engaged parents in schools across Scotland.
- Variability in the available additional support for parents with literacy, language or communication difficulties.

Parental involvement with the wider life of the school included:

- classroom activities (33%);
- speaking with staff about their child (76%);
- attending meetings (73%);
- attending events at school (86%);
- helping with after-school clubs (13%);
- attending Parent Council meetings (45%);
- helping with homework (93%);
- other types of involvement (51%).

Over three-quarters of respondents (in the Parent Council survey) believed that their school did enough to promote parental involvement in: the different ways that parents can work with the school to help their child's learning (78%); how parents can have their say about the way the school is run (70%); and how parents can help their child to learn skills and improve school learning (78%).



6.2 HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

The majority of respondents considered that the increased focus on and promotion of learning at home had been a positive outcome of the Parental Involvement Act.



Examples of the way in which schools had supported respondents to help their children learn at home covered a range of methods. These included: guidance on homework; information evenings; workshops; study strategies; visual images of children learning in school; life skills; Show My Homework; Facebook groups; GLOW at Home communications; and homework diaries. Suggestions for the future included: YouTube links; films; reading books over the summer holidays; textbook recommendations; useful study websites; more accessible teaching staff who are willing to engage with parents; and robust homework policies.

The majority of parents understood 'learning at home' to mean 'homework'. Further clarification is required to help broaden parents' and staff's understanding of what learning at home is and can be.

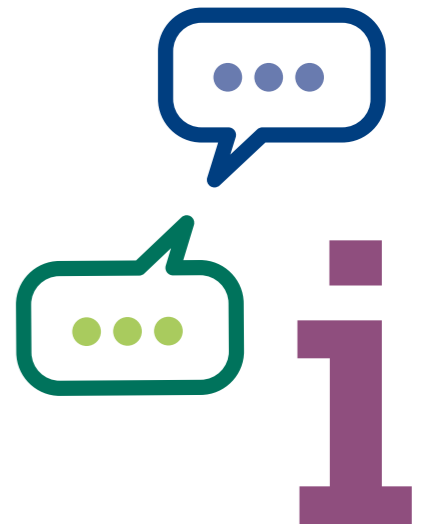
Positive impacts of the Act on learning at home

- Learning at home goes beyond assigned homework.
- Schools recognise the need to support parents with learning at home and have developed resources to help.
- IT platforms are being used to help with homework and learning at home.
- Communications, relationships and partnership working between schools and parents have improved.
- There is greater involvement from families.

Limitations of the Act

As well as the benefits, some responses highlighted limitations on learning at home. These were:

- Schools still have difficulty engaging with families.
- There is a lack of support for parents with literacy, communication or language difficulties.
- The Act does not address the lack of resources faced by schools, nor the pressures on the education system.
- There is a greater need for family learning, along with an understanding of the opportunities available and the benefits this has for the child and the adult.
- Parents of children with additional support needs require more help with learning at home.



6.3 PARENTAL REPRESENTATION

Overall, changes to parental representation were viewed positively.

Positive impacts of the Act

The key improvements highlighted in comparison to the previous system of School Boards were:

- Parent Councils are more inclusive and better able to represent the voice of the wider parent forum.
- There is better partnership working and engagement between parents, schools and local authorities.
- Parent Councils have greater involvement in the running of the school and school governance (recruitment of senior school staff, support through school inspection).
- Parent Councils have greater flexibility and independence from the school.
- Schools are more supportive of Parent Councils than previously.
- The voice and views of parents are heard at a national level through the National Parent Forum of Scotland.

Areas for improvement

Respondents to the call for evidence raised two key limitations to current parental representation arrangements:

- Parent Councils could do a better job of representing the views of all parents. This was particularly in relation to non-resident parents, those with lower levels of literacy and those with English as an additional language.
- There is still a lack of clarity among parents over the roles and responsibilities of the Parent Council and parent-teacher associations.

6.4 RECRUITMENT OF SENIOR SCHOOL STAFF

Not every respondent had been involved in the recruitment of senior school staff but the vast majority believed that it was right that parents should be represented during the process.

The involvement of parents in the recruitment of senior school staff was considered to be a positive development resulting from legislation.

Of those who had been involved:

- 49% felt adequately prepared for the process.
- 47% believed their opinion was taken into account.
- 49% considered the involvement of Parent Councils in the interview process to be worthwhile.
- 32% believed Parent Council representation in the interview process would change the outcome.

Parental involvement in the process of recruiting senior school staff was valued by parents and schools. The process strengthened the relationship between school staff and parents. It also gave parents a greater understanding of what candidates go through when applying for senior posts.

Respondents highlighted some of the challenges and limitations of involving parents in the recruitment of senior school staff. Not all parents were aware that they could be involved. Some respondents who had been involved felt their input was limited, given that the final decisions on appointments were taken by the local authority.

7

How has the landscape, practice and approaches to parental involvement evolved since the 2006 Act?

Local authorities and schools have been given a number of policy frameworks and strategies since the Parental Involvement Act was introduced in 2006.



The Scottish Government published the 2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education in December 2016.

This document brings together a number of plans and sets out key activities across the education system. Parental engagement is identified in the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan as a key driver for change. It states:

“ We want to improve and increase the ways in which parents, carers and families can engage with teachers and partners to support their children and increase the voice of parents and carers in leading improvements within schools.

Respondents identified several approaches relating to parental involvement that had worked well. The outcomes of these approaches included:

- Increased partnership working between parents and teachers.
- A greater awareness of the importance of parental involvement within schools.
- Increased parental involvement in children's learning.
- Involvement of parents in the recruitment of senior school staff.
- Improved parental volunteering.
- New methods of communication between teachers and parents (e.g. social media, Dojo).
- Programmes and policies within schools and local authorities to increase parental involvement.
- Good parent/pupil relationships.
- Effectiveness of Parent Councils.
- Awareness among parents of the work of the school and improved school evaluations.
- Successful fundraising events.

Many respondents identified the following as areas in need of improvement:

- A need to increase the awareness of the Parental Involvement Act among teachers.
- Training for Parent Council members.
- Clearer support for Parent Councils to ensure parent groups receive the guidance they need.
- Professionals working with children and families require:
 - A clearer understanding of the Parental Involvement legislation.
 - Promotion of 'Engaging Parents and Families: A Toolkit for Practitioners'.
 - An understanding of the various requirements for practitioners in the HGIOS4 self-evaluation framework.
 - Training to be undertaken through initial teacher education programmes, continuous professional development and self-directed learning.
- Better sharing of good practice at local authority and national level.

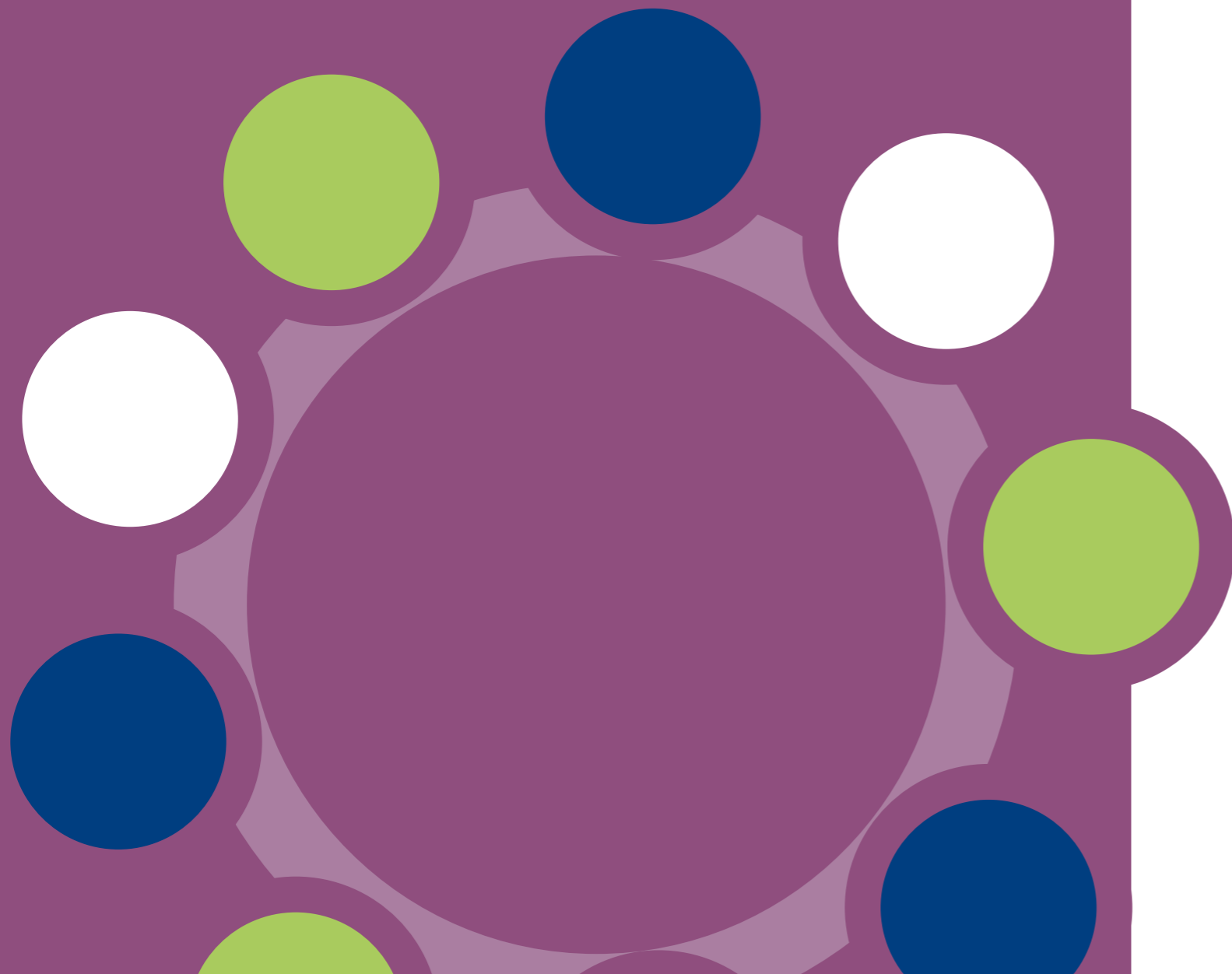
Despite the progress that has been made, policy and approaches will have to change in order to meet future priorities.

Respondents proposed a number of ideas for consideration in future policies and frameworks. Their suggestions included:

- Promoting the link between parental involvement and improved learning outcomes, including through the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan.
- Supporting and training teachers and Parent Councils to involve parents.
- Building and sharing best practice among local authorities, schools and parents.
- Ensuring greater alignment of parental involvement with existing policies.
- Providing opportunities for teachers to spend more time with pupils and their parents.
- Developing more play-centred learning both in and out of school.
- Ensuring that parental involvement aims are clear and measurable.
- Clarifying the roles and functions of the Parent Council.
- Exploring other forms of representation outwith Parent Councils.
- Providing training and support for Parent Councils.
- Provide clearer guidance on the Protecting Vulnerable Group membership to ensure that the scheme is used appropriately and does not become a barrier to parental involvement.

8

How effective are Parent Councils?



Although parents appreciated the wide range of media used to communicate with them, there was a preference for direct methods.

8.1 HOW DO PARENT COUNCILS CURRENTLY OPERATE?

The Parent Councils who responded to the call for evidence covered early-years settings (23%), primary (75%) and secondary (29%) school stages. The vast majority of respondents (to the Parent Council survey) believed that their Parent Council:

- Supported their school management (94%).
- Helped parents to be involved in the school community (90%).
- Helped community members to be involved in the school (69%).
- Represented the views of all parents (81%).
- Presented parental views to the local authority (76%).
- Promoted communications between parents and schools (89%).

A variety of methods were used by Parent Councils to communicate with the wider parent forum. These included text messaging, newsletters, school magazines, Parent Council events, school events, bag drops and direct communications.

8.2 WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE PARENT COUNCIL ROLE?

Almost all respondents (99%) stated that their school had a Parent Council, while 36% also had a parent-teacher association. Parent Councils tended to be in primary schools (75%) rather than early-years settings (23%) or secondary schools (29%). Parent Councils included a mixture of male and female members – parents, school staff and co-opted members.

Over 70% of respondents to the Parent Council survey and 68% of respondents to the parental questionnaire commented that they felt respected and valued by their school leadership. Only 23% of respondents felt valued and respected by other parents. Less than a third (28%) of respondents believed they represented the diversity of their school community.

Respondents were of the opinion that their Parent Council listened to them (62%) and provided information for parents (61%). They also believed they were made to feel included in the life of the school (56%) and that their child's school listened to the Parent Council (65%).

Nearly all respondents (Parent Council survey) stated that their headteacher reported to Parent Councils on the school development plan (91%), ambitions for the school (93%) and the Standards and Quality report (89%). The majority (91%) said their headteacher supported the role and functions of the Parent Council.

Views on the impact of support for education were mixed. Some responses highlighted ways in which the creation of the Parent Council and forum has had a positive impact, while others felt there had been little or no impact.

Strengths of the Parent Council role

- Parents had a voice and a way to express their opinions.
- There was increased parental involvement in school decision-making and school improvements.
- The working relationship between parents, schools and local authorities had improved.
- There was more involvement in the recruitment of senior school staff.

Limitations of the Parent Council role

- Parent Councils do not fully represent the wider parent forum. More women than men become members, for example.
- There is an overall low level of uptake of membership of Parent Councils.
- The impact of the Parent Council varies from school to school, depending on the individuals involved (both parents and staff).
- Respondents discussed the perceived 'cliquey' nature of parent councils, as also found in research by [Gathered Together](#) on the experiences of ethnic minority parents.

Key Finding

Ongoing intelligence gathered by the National Parent Forum of Scotland suggests inconsistencies in the amount of financial and other support given to Parent Councils by local authorities.

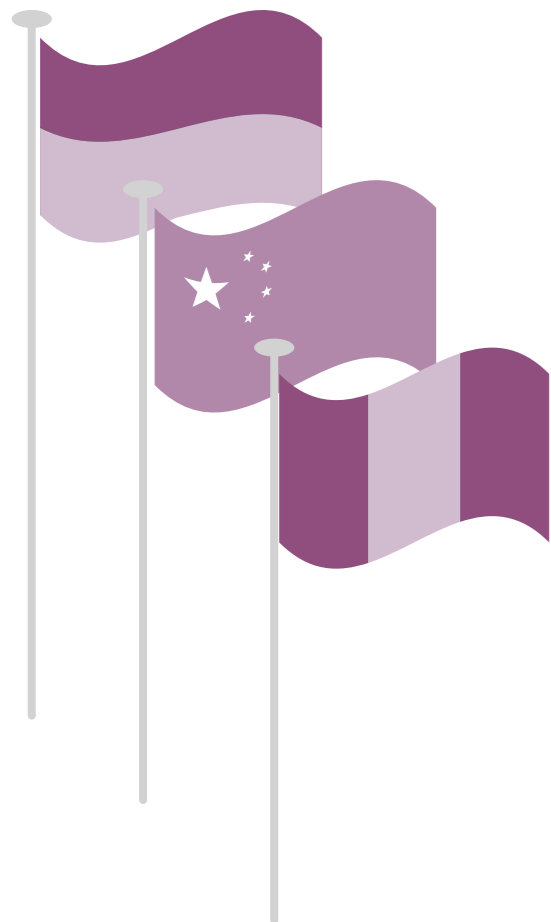
9

To what extent are parents informed and involved with their school and engaged in their child's learning?

Professionals who responded to this question identified the benefits and progress made in engaging members of the wider parent forum. This had created an 'open door' approach and promoted the message that parents had the right both to be heard and to get involved in their child's learning.

9.1 HELPING PARENTS TO GET INVOLVED

Responses to the Parent Council survey showed willingness and efforts to continue to involve other parents, including those from a range of diverse and cultural backgrounds and marginalised groups. Successful examples and ways to involve and engage parents were provided in responses, alongside frustrations over the difficulties and challenges experienced. Respondents stated they would welcome ideas on how to involve more parents. Almost two-fifths (38%) of respondents felt their local authority did enough to promote parental involvement, while around the same number (41%) considered that the Scottish Government did enough to promote parental involvement.



9.2 ARE CERTAIN PARENTS MORE OR LESS LIKELY TO GET INVOLVED?

Parents with English as an additional language

Ten parents from a minority ethnic background attended two focus group sessions as part of the Review. Parents for whom English was an additional language found the extra support and outreach around language invaluable. For some this took the form of successful home visits where extra language support was offered. This helped to link home-life with work undertaken at school. Other parents attended after-school clubs that offered language support to groups of around five people. Having interpreters present at parents' nights was greatly valued.

Parents for whom English was an additional language were able to send their child to extra schooling provided in other languages. There were differences noted between the work offered at such schools and those at mainstream school. Parents found these schools had a different system of exams and workbooks to support coursework. This meant that extracurricular work could at times clash and parents felt it was more substantial than their child's mainstream schooling.

Respondents believed that practitioners required training on their duties under the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) and in particular on the need to be inclusive of all parents.

Parents identified measures which they believe would help overcome some of the challenges they faced around language. School handbooks were only provided in English, which resulted in parents being unsure about the processes of their child's school and what was required when first sending their child to school. Parents from a minority ethnic background were aware that their children's language skills often surpassed their own, relying on their children to be messengers between home and school.

During these occasions, and for learning in general, parents felt the school could make more effort to ensure they fully understood the messages being conveyed. Additional-schooling teachers approach the language divide by using more pictures, numbers and concepts that can be grasped without knowledge of English. Visual aids were considered of great benefit during the first three years of schooling before being gradually phased out.

9.3 WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

Teachers' attitudes and demeanour were viewed as crucial in ensuring all parents felt supported and able to be involved. Parents across the Review appreciated the support provided when teachers listened, responded, kept parents informed and ensured any response was sustained for an appropriate period of time. When these values were in place, schools felt open and approachable places. The manner in which teachers approached parents regarding any issues concerning their child was important. Being calm and caring as opposed to taking a 'stern' approach was imperative.

Parents appreciated teachers being approachable and actively making themselves available at times when parents were already in school – for example, being visible after school in the foyer or the playground and speaking with parents to offer feedback or address any concerns. Parents also appreciated having the option to make appointments to speak to staff when required.

Parents of children with Additional Support Needs particularly valued this contact as specific concerns over transitions were common. There still remains a need to raise awareness among teaching staff and practitioners about the Additional Support for Learning Act (2014).

Gender

The results of this Review highlight the gender imbalance in parental involvement. Parent Councils tended to have more female members than male. There is also a need to ensure that non-resident parents (where appropriate) are aware of and are provided with information regarding their opportunities to be involved.

Primary vs secondary

Difficulties continue in engaging with the parents of secondary-school pupils. Further data is required on the best ways for schools to engage with these parents. Additionally, consideration could be given to the role and functions of Parent Councils in secondary schools and whether this needs to be different from that of primary schools.



School trips / extracurricular activities

Parents throughout the Review welcomed the opportunity to be involved in school trips and extracurricular activities. Parents in the focus groups particularly valued outdoor learning as opposed to children being in a classroom all day. This was seen as important to ensure that all children could learn more about how the world works, about citizenship, hospitals, farms and food production. Empowering teachers and increased funding were viewed as methods to take this forward.

Communications with parents

Many parents who responded to the call for evidence explained they were aware of the general topics covered in the curriculum but were less aware of more specialist topics, and frequently desired more information on the school day. Although a flexible and changing curriculum was welcomed, parents in the focus groups felt they lacked a textbook or course guide to help them support their child's learning at home. Updates on pupils' progress were obtained from jotters but a yearly prospectus of the topics to be covered was considered necessary to enable schools and parents to work together more closely and in partnership.

Parental involvement and school improvement

This Review demonstrates the clear connection and positive impacts of parental involvement in school improvement. Highly effective practice in school improvement takes place when a range of stakeholders (including parents) take lead roles (HGIOS4). The findings show the greatest impacts when schools consistently include and review parental involvement in school improvement – as opposed to doing so on an ad-hoc basis or predicated on what had happened previously. Parental involvement requires to be seen in the context of school improvement and be subject to self-evaluation and continuous development.



Valued support

Parents throughout the Review described open afternoons or assemblies that encouraged them to attend events with teachers and children together in the classroom. Bringing parents into the classroom as part of a more continuous process of communication was welcomed. Parents valued and children gained from the organised activities, such as presenting ideas to the assembled group on the day.

Open afternoons and joint after-school clubs increased the capacity of parents to support and understand their child's needs. One such club, 'Families in Partnership', offered a short weekly curriculum explaining the way the school was teaching literacy and numeracy. Parents welcomed the pack they were given by the club and benefited from gaining an understanding of teaching as well as practical tools and skills to assist with learning at home. Help with learning at home was tailored to reflect work going on in the classroom.

Digital technology

Parents responding to the call for evidence agreed that the internet and social media had increased their awareness of school activity. By using social media, schools are more able than ever before to publish information in an appropriate and effective manner. Despite some concern over their own computer literacy skills, and digital safety, parents suggested that phones are commonly used to access this information.

Online posts allowed pupils' achievements, photographs of school activities and information about events to be shared and accessed easily. School handbooks were considered useful guides (despite language barriers) and provided much of what parents needed to know, although it was noted that these are distributed infrequently. This online information helped increase awareness across all levels of school activity. It also helped parents to understand the journey their child would take during the various stages of school and what would be required of them as parents.



10

Conclusion



It is clear that the 2006 Act has helped to support a step-change in the way in which parents are recognised and supported to be involved in their child's education.

10.1 KEY MESSAGES

Key messages

The Review found a desire to update and improve key aspects of the Act, and to revise the accompanying guidance. The 'Engaging Parents and Families: A Toolkit for Practitioners' requires to be updated on an ongoing basis. All stakeholders should be aware that confusion exists in interpreting the terms 'parental involvement' and 'parental engagement'. The revised guidance should clarify the definitions of both terms.

Increased support for parental engagement in the early years is required – the legislation does not extend to children accessing government-funded early-learning and childcare, despite the importance of parental engagement at this age for supporting children to achieve good learning outcomes.

The Review found major improvements in the last ten years in the way that teachers and headteachers communicate and work with parents. However, important challenges remain in relation to a lack of awareness and appreciation among some teachers of the role and contribution of parents. Further partnership working is required to ensure that initial teacher education programmes and training and development courses keep pace with the very best practice and research evidence on parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning.

There was no desire for statutory decision-making powers to be assigned to Parent Councils. Neither was there a desire for a return to the previous School Board arrangements. There was, however, considerable support for clarifying the current statutory duties on headteachers in relation to involving parents in the life of the school, and for modernising the relevant duties to stress greater collaboration with Parent Councils to ensure effective consultation. The role of the Parent Council as a strong representative body must be protected in the legislative framework and promoted among parents. The inconsistencies in financial and other support provided by local authorities to Parent Councils should be addressed. Financial support to Parent Councils must also be protected to enable them to fulfil their role and function under the 2006 Act.

The Review found that many Parent Councils were unaware of any responsibilities placed on them and local authorities regarding equalities and diversity. However, many Parent Councils did recognise a lack of diversity within themselves and would welcome new strategies to address this.

Further work is required on the 'learning at home' strand of the Parental Involvement Act (2006). Clarification of the definition of 'learning at home', further guidance and case-study examples would be of benefit to all. There are concerns that over the last ten years priority has been given to implementing the home/school partnerships and parental representation strands of the Act at the expense of learning at home. Practitioners should consider whether a family-learning approach is appropriate for the families they are working with.

It is clear that the most effective Parent Councils fulfil the following criteria:

- They include parents from a range of diverse and cultural backgrounds (including marginalised groups) to ensure the wider parent forum is represented.
- They support parents from the wider forum to be involved in events other than Parent Council meetings.
- They work with feeder establishments, including early-learning and childcare settings and primary schools, to support increased levels of parental involvement with the diverse parent forum, ensuring all catchment areas are represented wherever possible.
- They seek to ensure high-quality two-way communications with all members of the wider parent forum, including non-resident parents.
- They review their constitutions at least once every four years to ensure these accurately reflect current requirements.
- They promote the role and function of the Parent Council.
- They highlight examples of good practice to the local authority and Education Scotland through the area lead officer.

Key recommendations

The following 38 recommendations are made to Scottish Government, national agencies, local authorities and schools.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland in association with the National Parental Engagement Steering Group intends to review these recommendations at the end of the academic year 2017/18 and report progress to Scottish Ministers by the end of 2019.



Recommendations to Scottish Government and national agencies

10.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The Scottish Government should consult on a range of significant amendments to the Parental Involvement Act (2006) and the accompanying statutory guidance. Following this consultation, the Scottish Government should introduce a Bill to modernise, extend and strengthen the legislative framework on parental involvement.**

The amended legislative framework should lay the basis for the next ten years of parental involvement and engagement. It should 'future-proof' the Act, and it should deliver a further step-change in culture and practice. The amendments should seek to strengthen the Act in a number of key areas, including clarifying roles and responsibilities, providing clear definitions of key terms and placing a greater emphasis on parental engagement in learning. Parent Councils should be retained and strengthened as the main route by which parents can influence the running of their school. Duties and powers related to parental engagement in children's learning should feature as a more prominent aspect in the legislative framework. Efforts to strengthen the Act and its accompanying guidance should also ensure that the legislative framework on parental involvement fully reflects the Equality Act (2010). Within any refreshed guidance accompanying a new Act there must be clarification that the role of Parent Council members is to represent all parents in the school and not to address matters of concern regarding any individual parent or child. A full list of initial proposals to strengthen the Act follow these recommendations (Section 10.3).

- 2 As part of its consultation on amendments to the 2006 Act, the Scottish Government should propose that the legislation be extended to early years.**

The Scottish Government should extend relevant provisions within the Act to settings that provide the funded entitlement to early learning and childcare. These should include provisions that are shown to have the greatest potential to improve children's educational outcomes, in particular learning at home. This should include, but also take account of the unique nature of, private and voluntary-sector settings providing funded early learning and childcare in partnership with local authorities and funded child-minding places. The Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland inspection frameworks should reflect any amendments to the Act. All other recommendations that follow presume inclusion of early learning and childcare settings.

- 3 All major Scottish Government policies, strategies and frameworks in relation to early years and schools should take full account of the importance of parental involvement and engagement.**

As part of this, the Scottish Government should involve the National Parent Forum of Scotland in reviewing plans to support the National Improvement Framework.

Similarly, the parent umbrella group should be involved in reviewing the plans of the local authority.

- 4 The Scottish Government should work with key national partners to review and update the National Parenting Strategy in light of recent policy developments and frameworks.**

This should focus on improving support for parents to engage in their children's learning at school and at home.

- 5 The Scottish Government and key national agencies should seek to work with national parenting organisations and parents in the development and review of publications relating to early years and schools. Communication materials to parents should reflect the key principles set out in the Parental Communication Plan for the National Improvement Framework.**

- 6 The Scottish Government should ensure there is a measurable increase in parents' access to proven, evidence based family learning programmes and interventions that support improvements in learning at home.**

The Scottish Government should bring forward proposals to ensure there is a measurable increase in parents' access to family learning programmes and interventions that support improvements in learning at home. Initial concentration should be on those experiencing socio-economic inequalities and most in need. The Scottish Government should ensure that existing funding commitments to improve educational attainment (e.g. Scottish Attainment Fund) are aligned to, and support, this area. Future funding should consider inclusion of early years and childcare.

- 7 As part of the Governance Review, the Scottish Government should ensure that parents are represented on any new regional boards.**

Recommendations to Scottish Government and national agencies

- 8 The Scottish Government should ensure that governance and funding arrangements for education help to address the full range of barriers that prevent parents becoming more involved in their child's school, including financial or capacity reasons.**

The Scottish Government should make clear that funding streams to schools may be used in a wide variety of ways which may include identifying and raising awareness of the barriers to parental engagement. These may include: helping to pay for parent transport costs; funding childcare to encourage parents to attend school activities, while bearing in mind that parents' working hours vary widely; and to provide additional resources to encourage more parents to get involved and engaged in learning.

- 9 The Scottish Government should consider further legal or policy reforms to encourage and support parental leave and flexible working to allow parents to engage with their child's learning and related activities within the school.**

While this would require a culture change among many employers, it would remove some of the barriers to parental involvement. A national scheme or charter to encourage employers could be considered as the first step in achieving this culture change. National policy proposals and guidance to help encourage, support and enable volunteering in schools by local parents, family members and the wider community would require to be developed in consultation with the National Parent Forum of Scotland and a wide range of partners. These may include the Scottish Government Family Friendly Group and national parenting organisations.

- 10 The Scottish Government should continue to work with local authorities to ensure that the Parent Forum, including Parent Councils, are fully included in a meaningful way and at a consistent level in decision-making processes in relation to key national initiatives and investment programmes, such as Pupil Equity Funding.**

Guidance, training and support are required at a local level to build the capacity of parents and enable them to work on this with their school.

- 11 The National Parental Engagement Steering Group should be retained and its role should be strengthened as a working group helping to influence, challenge and guide national policies.**

Scottish ministers should invite the steering group to work in conjunction with the government and Education Scotland officials to gather evidence of key strengths and examples of good practice within local authorities' parental involvement strategies. Examples of good practice case studies should continue to be shared on the National Improvement Hub and other platforms.

- 12 The Scottish Government should review the effectiveness of the 'communicating with parents' section of the Additional Support for Learning code of practice.**

- 13 Guidance for practitioners on a range of parental engagement themes should be updated through the 'Engaging Parents and Families: A Toolkit for Practitioners'.**

Further dedicated toolkit resources should be developed for practitioners to ensure that groups of parents who face additional barriers to engaging with their children's learning, or with the life and work of the school, receive the support and advice they need. This includes parents with English as an additional language; disabled parents; parents who have a negative perception of school and education; and parents experiencing poverty and socio-economic inequalities. Clear definitions of parental involvement and parental engagement should be uploaded to the National Improvement Hub for practitioners. Parent-friendly definitions should also be uploaded to Parentzone Scotland website..

- 14 Education Scotland should take further steps to promote the benefits and ways for parents to get involved in their child's learning.**

This should include the development of advice on Parentzone Scotland and the refresh of the 'Parent as Partners in their Children's Learning' toolkit.

Other key priorities to be considered in the revised toolkit include:

- Understanding and practical application of the 'learning at home' strand of the Act
- Diversity
- Removing the perception of formality
- Methods of using alternative digital formats
- Clarifying the role of the Parent Council
- Promoting and sharing self-evaluation tools for Parent Councils
- A set of standards for Parent Council communications. This should identify methods of improving the quality of communications between Parent Councils and the wider parent forum to avoid inconsistencies
- Promoting wider parental engagement in secondary schools.

Revisions to the toolkit for Parent Councils should take into account any changes that are required as a result of the Governance Review.

Recommendations to Scottish Government and national agencies

15 Education Scotland should involve the National Parent Forum of Scotland and national parent organisations in the ongoing review and monitoring of how the main self-evaluation frameworks are working in practice (the 'How Good is Our...' series).

In addition, Education Scotland should take further steps to ensure that parents play a meaningful role in the inspection process. Inspection findings should be used to identify strengths and needs. They should also be used to influence future policy developments, as well as to monitor parental views on involvement and engagement in children's learning.

16 Education Scotland should review its resources and information for parents across all sectors. New resources for parents and practitioners should be developed where required.

Consideration should be given to developing easily accessible versions of resources.

The following three recommendations should be considered outwith existing resources already allocated to continuing professional development for staff.

17 The Scottish Government should provide dedicated funding to support parental engagement in its Digital Learning strategy, including infrastructure and continuing professional development for staff.

Scottish Government, Education Scotland and National Parent Forum of Scotland should work together to clearly define how digital technology can support the parental engagement agenda, with a view to developing clear requirements and a clear strategy to deliver those requirements. As part of its implementation of the Digital Learning strategy, Scottish Government, Education Scotland, schools and local authorities should work together to improve broadband access for learners and teachers in schools and the wider community.

18 The General Teaching Council of Scotland should work with initial teacher education providers and representatives from the National Parental Engagement Steering Group. It should also support the development and delivery of quality-assured continuing professional development training to ensure that practitioners are equipped and supported to work with parents and families and to develop best practice. Practitioners should have the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Initial teacher-training courses should have a mandatory element on parental engagement, policy, research and practice.

The Scottish Social Services Council and the Scottish Qualifications Authority should similarly work with universities, colleges and other training bodies to ensure that all early-learning and childcare qualifications have a mandatory element on parental engagement. This should be appropriate to supporting children's learning and development in the early years. The Scottish Social Services Council and the Scottish Qualifications Authority should also support the development and delivery of quality-assured continuing professional development for early-learning and childcare practitioners.

Local authorities and key partners should ensure that all current practitioners delivering school education, including funded early-learning and childcare hours, receive access to continuing professional development on parental engagement within an agreed time frame. They should also develop ways of ensuring ongoing opportunities for practitioners to access training and support throughout their career.

19 The Scottish College of Educational Leadership should work with parenting organisations leading the 'Into Headship' qualification to ensure the parental perspective and parental engagement priorities help to shape the qualification and facilitation of relevant courses.

Parental engagement should be a key element in any new leadership programme and continuous improvement training programmes. This should include consultation with individual parents, with national parenting organisations and with researchers with expertise in parental engagement. The new Excellence In Headship package should also fully support the parental involvement agenda and ensure that headteachers and staff are equipped to work with parents.

Recommendations to Scottish Government and national agencies

20 Scottish Government should fund new research on:

- Effective parental involvement and engagement strategies and approaches with a focus on key ages and stages of children's learning
- Non-traditional family structures, with a focus on non-resident parents
- Engagement with marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act (2010)
- Learning at home, including homework
- Further work as a result of the Family Learning Review
- Parental engagement in secondary schools.

The Scottish Government should work with Education Scotland on this research which should lead to the development of practical advice and support tools for early-learning practitioners, teachers and headteachers.

It should include the views of children and young people, while also reflecting changing socio-economic trends and geographic challenges, and the contribution of partner organisations including those from the third sector.

21 The National Parent Forum of Scotland should publish a joint interim progress report with the Scottish Government, the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and relevant stakeholders by the end of 2018. A joint full progress report should be published by the end of 2019.

Recommendations to local authorities

22 Local authorities should identify a parental involvement officer who can take forward parental involvement and engagement in an effective and co-ordinated way.

This officer should promote parental engagement through multi-agency meetings and work in partnership with the local National Parent Forum of Scotland representative and other parents. Joint-working is also required with relevant national parenting organisations and the third sector. Steps should be taken to ensure the role is fully supported and financed. It is acknowledged that, for some local authorities, this will not be a full-time post. The role requires to be wider than schools and should include working across different sectors and different teams as well as collaboration across local authority services.

23 Local authorities should ensure that adequate funding for parental involvement and engagement is built into all policies, programmes and strategies to improve outcomes and increase attainment for children, young people and parents in line with the drivers of the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan.

24 Reasonable funding must be allocated to Parent Councils by all local authorities.

This should be sufficient to cover items such as: regular communications with parents (printing and postage, text communications or email facilities); a clerk to support the operation of the Parent Council; and training and information sessions for the Parent Council. Training programmes for Parent Councils should be specifically tailored to help build the capacity of parents. This could include training on digital media to enable Parent Councils to communicate more effectively and safely with the wider parent forum. These programmes should always be made available in a digital format to ensure wider access.

25 Local authorities should take further steps to raise awareness among parents on the procedures for recruiting senior school staff, and should continue to support parents to become involved in the recruitment process.

Where local authorities use assessment centres or similar procedures as part of the recruitment process for Directors of Education/Children's Services and/or Chief Education Officers, parents should be involved in this process. Where a senior post is filled on a temporary basis, the headteacher or local authority should have a responsibility to discuss this process with the Parent Council in order to help inform parents.

Recommendations to local authorities

26 Local authorities should include provision on enrolment forms to allow email addresses to be shared with the Parent Council.

Enrolment procedures should include provision for the details of both resident parents and non-resident parents.

27 The Education (Scotland) Act (2016) requires local authorities each year to prepare and publish details of activities undertaken regarding their parental involvement strategy. They should comply in full with this requirement while also ensuring that parental engagement is included in the broader National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan reports. These reports should be jargon-free and written in plain English.

The parental engagement strategy, whether it is a stand-alone strategy or integrated into a broader improvement strategy, should be easily located on the local authority's website or through normal communication channels, including a link from school websites. The parental involvement strategy, or the relevant aspects of the broader improvement plan, should contain measurable outcomes on parental involvement and engagement, and progress should be monitored.

28 Local authorities should encourage and facilitate the creation and running of a Parent Council and parent forum umbrella group in their local area.

Local authorities should consult with this group on all significant matters that have an impact on education. This group should endeavour to attract parents who reflect the range of diverse and cultural backgrounds and family shapes present in the parent forum including non-resident parents and marginalised groups.

29 All education committees (or equivalent) should have two parent members with full voting rights (where the education committee has such a format), elected from this umbrella group or by direct election by parents. Parent members on the education committee should regularly attend the umbrella group meetings (where applicable) and report back to them and Parent Councils.

For the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland, one member will be sufficient. Guidance should be provided for elected members on best practice for including and involving parents in committee meetings.

30 Local authorities should support the Parent Councils within a learning community, including pre-5 settings, to meet regularly, so that best practice can be shared.

Secondary schools should consider working in clusters to share best practice, aid transitions and work collaboratively.

31 Local authorities should ensure that parents in all communities have access to family learning opportunities that meet their needs.

32 Local authorities should support schools to develop strategies to involve parents in the life and work of the school and engage in their children's learning.

These strategies should be part of the school's improvement plan.

33 During the course of this research, the Review Reference Group became aware of initial plans by SEEMiS (the local authority management information system provider for schools) to develop additional functionality relating to communications with parents. The Review recommends that the National Parent Forum of Scotland and other national parenting organisations are fully involved in consultation on any changes to SEEMiS functionality so that parents have an opportunity to help shape any improvements.

Recommendations to schools

34 To communicate as effectively as possible:

- Schools should ensure that systems are in place for communicating with everyone in the parent forum, i.e. resident and non-resident parents (where appropriate), those with protected characteristics and marginalised groups.
- Communications with parents should be clear, jargon-free, specific and easily accessible for the diverse needs of the wider parent forum.
- A variety of methods and approaches should be used by schools to communicate with the parent forum, including face-to-face, traditional communication methods and digital media.
- Consideration should be given when communicating with parents who have literacy, language and communication difficulties.
- Schools should ensure that parents know who to contact when they wish to discuss their child's learning or wellbeing. They should provide a private space for such discussions and make sure parents are given adequate time and support.
- Consideration should be given to family circumstances, i.e. kinship care, looked-after children, parent(s) in custody, disabilities, employment patterns.

35 In partnership with communities, schools should provide support:

- Parents should be given opportunities to understand the way learning and teaching takes place in the classroom.
- There should be support for parents who are less comfortable in engaging with learning activities.
- Schools should work with partners to provide additional support for parents with literacy, language and communication difficulties.

36 The Parental Involvement legislation should develop principles to underpin the duties and powers contained elsewhere in the Act. Schools should follow the existing legislation:

- They should follow the school handbook guidance and ensure the handbook is produced in consultation with the Parent Council. The handbook should be easily accessible and understood by all parents.
- Schools should follow the procedures for parental involvement in the appointment of headteachers and deputy headteachers.
- Schools should promote the role and function of the Parent Council as well as other less formal opportunities for parents to be involved in the life and work of the school.
- They should consult regularly with parents, and provide and promote a variety of opportunities to include and involve all members of the wider parent forum.

37 Schools should provide parents with effective strategies to support children's learning at home and in the community. Help should be given to broaden parents' understanding of what learning at home is and can be (including the parents of children and young people who require additional support for learning). Schools should take an evidence-based approach to the setting of homework and supporting learning at home.

The school strategy should reflect the corporate parenting, family learning and parenting strategies of the local authority as part of a progression for learning at home.

38 Schools should work in partnership with Parent Councils, headteachers, staff, pupils, relevant stakeholders and partners to influence significant additional funding budgets devolved to schools (for example, Pupil Equity Funding and Attainment Challenge Funds).

10.3 OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE LEGISLATION ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Review identified the following key priorities for consideration in the amendments to legislation.

** Note: these are initial proposals and should be subjected to full public consultation.*

Changes to strengthen the 2006 Act – initial proposals:

- a. The duties in relation to headteachers' relationship with Parent Councils should be strengthened to encourage a partnership approach and stronger involvement of parents and Parent Council members when reviewing or developing school policies, curriculum or improvement activity.
- b. The Act should be extended to cover early years (see Recommendation 2, on page 56).
- c. The duties in relation to parental engagement in learning and learning at home should be updated and clarified to ensure that this becomes a more prominent aspect in the legislation.
- d. The duties to review and improve parental involvement strategies should be strengthened to: require an appropriate minimum period before strategies are refreshed; provide clear principles to guide the review of those strategies; and include a requirement for parental involvement strategies to contain specific and measurable aims and objectives.
- e. The duties on parental involvement should be strengthened to encourage more effective and frequent two-way communications between Parent Councils and the wider parent forum.
- f. The legislation should develop principles to underpin the duties and powers contained elsewhere in the Act.
- g. Current duties to consult with parents on matters that impact on education provision should be strengthened to ensure that the legal framework underpins meaningful consultation.
- h. Definitions within the Act should be updated and expanded to reflect changes in practice and approach over the past ten years.
- i. The Act should contain a requirement that Parent Councils should be consulted in appropriate ways in relation to temporary acting-up positions for the posts of senior school staff, where such an appointment is likely to last for several months or longer. However, any requirement to consult should not impact on the local authority's or the school's ability to recruit into posts in an effective way.
- j. There should be additional duties and powers to facilitate greater collaboration among Parent Councils. This could include provisions relating to the development and operation of authority-wide Parent Council forums.
- k. The duties on local authorities should be strengthened to ensure reasonable funding is provided to Parent Councils to allow them to fulfil their duties as outlined in the Act.
- l. Any new new legislative duties need to reflect the specific challenges, culture and approach in secondary schools.

In addition to the improvements above, the Scottish Government should look across all other relevant education and early years legislation to ensure that parental involvement/engagement and consultation requirements are clear for practitioners and relevant stakeholders. Requirements should refer to the parental involvement legislation (i.e. the 2006 Act) to ensure that relevant duties support meaningful consultation with parents..

Changes to the statutory guidance

The statutory guidance on parental involvement should be updated in line with changes to the primary legislation and regulations. In addition:

- The statutory guidance should provide greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of headteachers in relation to parental involvement and engagement.
- The statutory guidance should be updated to provide a summary of schools' and Parent Councils' duties in relation to the Equality Act (2010), with a focus on how these relate to their duties and powers under the parental involvement legislation.
- The statutory guidance should provide further comprehensive guidance on the 'learning at home' strand of the Act.

There are a number of key messages and recommendations from this Review of the impact of the Parental Involvement Act (2006).

- There is strong evidence that parental involvement helps to raise attainment and improve outcomes for children and young people and for schools.
- Various positive outcomes of parental involvement can be a catalyst for change across social, educational and economic policy areas.
- Parents, children and families are a common denominator in policies and agendas.
- Integrating parental involvement into policies and strategies to raise attainment, ensure cross-departmental outcomes and narrow the gap between the lowest and highest achievers is key in driving this agenda forward.

Appendix A

BACKGROUND: SCOTTISH POLICY MAPPING

This section provides an overview of the key national policies and frameworks introduced by the Scottish Government that have had an impact on education and parental involvement. These policies provide the overarching framework and guidance within which local authorities, schools and practitioners should work.

STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS ETC ACT (2000)

The Act requires local authorities to have regard to pupils' views in decisions that significantly affect them in relation to their school education. Such changes in school governance have enabled more pupils to become involved in the life of their school. Consultation with children and young people on the policies and procedures that affect them is increasingly reflected in legislative requirements.

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS (PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT) ACT (2006)

The Act aims to improve parents' involvement in their child's education and in schools more generally. It provides a framework giving all parents the opportunity to get the information they need to support their child and enabling them to express their views.

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE (2010)

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), introduced in 2010, was designed to transform all aspects of education in Scotland. The curriculum comprises a broad general education up to the end of S3, followed by a senior phase of learning from S4 to S6. Increased emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary learning, skills development and personal achievement. CfE is intended to foster four capacities in all young people, making them successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

In line with CfE, new National qualifications were introduced. National qualifications (1 to 5) replaced Access, Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications. The Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications were also revised to ensure they fully reflect CfE and were phased in from the academic year 2013/14.

A policy review published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that there was 'a great deal to be positive about' regarding the ongoing development of education policy, practice and leadership in Scotland. The review highlighted a number of beneficial developments:

- Levels of academic achievement are above international averages in science and reading (as measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA) and similar to the average in maths.
- Achievement levels are spread relatively equally.
- Scottish students are 'resilient'.
- Scottish schools are inclusive.
- There are clear upward trends in attainment and positive destinations.
- There are positive attitudes and connections.

However, the OECD also pointed out several problems and challenges and made recommendations, while acknowledging that CfE was experiencing a 'watershed' moment:

“ There has been a decade of patient work to put in place the full curriculum programme. That programme implementation process is nearing completion and this represents a prime opportunity boldly to enter a new phase.

SCHOOL HANDBOOK GUIDANCE – INFORMATION FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SCHOOLS FOLLOWING THE EDUCATION (SCHOOL AND PLACING INFORMATION) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS (2012)

The School Handbook Guidance accompanies the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations (2012). The guidance aims to provide local authorities and schools with a framework to develop a school handbook that their community would use. Local authorities and schools are encouraged to develop a school handbook in partnership with parents that reflects local circumstances and the needs of the community and supports children and young people.

NATIONAL PARENTING STRATEGY (2012)

This strategy highlights the positive difference that parents can make to their child's development and health and wellbeing. It aims to: make it easier for parents to understand the positive difference they can make to their child's development; help parents to feel confident in their ability to care for their child; feel reassured that help is available if and when they need support; and ultimately make parenting an even more rewarding experience.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) ACT (2014)

The Children and Young People Act furthers the Scottish Government's ambition for Scotland to be the best place to grow up. It reforms aspects of children's services, including improving 'the way services work to support children, young people and families' and strengthening 'the role of early-years support in children's and families' lives'. The wider public sector is accountable in the Act for its efforts to take forward the realisation of rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and it is required to report on what actions it is taking to progress this.

The Act sets the strategic direction for the way in which Scottish public services should be delivered, and assists public bodies in their endeavours to improve the life chances of children and young people.

HOW GOOD IS OUR SCHOOL? (4TH EDITION) (2015)

'How Good is Our School' (HGIOS) aims to support the growth of a culture of self-improvement across Scottish education. It builds on previous editions and continues the journey of moving Scottish education from being good overall to being great overall. The 4th Edition contains a toolkit of illustrations, exemplar features of highly effective practice and challenge questions. These can be adapted and used with learners, parents and partners across the school community. Engaging with parents is embedded throughout the quality indicators rather than being treated separately.


DELIVERING EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN SCOTTISH EDUCATION: A DELIVERY PLAN FOR SCOTLAND (2016)

The Delivery Plan builds upon the National Improvement Framework and outlines how the Scottish Government intends to close the gap in attainment between the least and most disadvantaged young people. Actions are outlined in the Delivery Plan to improve parental engagement in children's education so that parents and teachers become the 'key decision-makers' to help improve outcomes for children and young people.

The Delivery Plan also outlines the intention to deliver a number of improvements to the way in which schools communicate with and support parents. These include an in-depth review looking at the available evidence on family learning, improvements to online resources for parents, developing guidance on reporting to parents and the development of a comprehensive parent communication plan.

ENHANCING LEARNING AND TEACHING THROUGH THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY (2016)

The Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy aims to ensure all of Scotland's learners and educators are able to benefit from digital technology in their education. It recognises the role of schools and local authorities in deciding how technology can enrich their particular environment. The benefits of digital technology are viewed as extending beyond schools and practitioners to improving communications with parents:

 Parents and carers will also be able to capitalise on the increased use of digital technology to communicate more readily and easily with their child's school or early-learning provider, and stay up to date with and support their child's learning.

REVIEW OF FAMILY LEARNING (2016)

The Review of Family Learning is the first of its kind in Scotland. It considers the available evidence on family learning through research, case studies and consultation with partners.

Family learning is an approach that supports improved attainment and excellence and equity which leads to positive outcomes for both adults and children. Family learning is an early intervention and prevention approach which reaches the most disadvantaged communities. Family learning helps close the attainment gap through breaking the inter-generational cycles of deprivation and low attainment. The effects of family learning are known to extend beyond the duration of the intervention and provide lasting impacts and improved outcomes.

NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTTISH EDUCATION (2016)

The National Improvement Framework sets out the vision and priorities for children's progress in learning. The framework is key in driving work to 'continually improve Scottish education and close the attainment gap'. The framework aims to 'improve and increase ways in which parents and families can engage with teachers (and partners) to support their children, and increase the voice of parents in leading improvements with schools'.

Parental engagement is one of the six key drivers for improvement. It acknowledges the need for improvement in how parents and families engage with teachers (and partners) to support their children, and in how to increase the influence parents have in leading improvements within schools. As part of this improvement process, it is recognised that more evidence is required to monitor both the levels of parental engagement within schools and the impact these levels have on children's learning.

The framework is linked to other key national outcomes such as giving children the best start in life and being ready to succeed, tackling inequalities in Scottish society and improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk. It builds on other improvements and reforms such as 'Getting It Right For Every Child', 'The Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative', 'National Young Work Strategy' and 'Teaching Scotland's Future' (skilled workforce). The framework provides a shared focus to ensure that 'partners are focused effectively on key priorities' to work together and make the vision a reality.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION: A GOVERNANCE REVIEW (2016)

In 2016 the Scottish Government consulted on a number of questions about the governance of Scottish education. The Governance Review aims to challenge thinking and practice, to build capacity where it is needed and to ensure that roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear. The Scottish Government wants to empower teachers and early-years workers to make the best decisions for children and young people. It believes that decisions about children's learning and school life should be taken at school level, supported by parents and the local community.

THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE (2015) AND PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING (2017)

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched in February 2015 to focus and accelerate improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland. This targeted initiative is focused on supporting pupils in the local authorities with the highest concentrations of deprivation. In 2017 schools will receive Pupil Equity Funding (£1,200 for each child who claims a free school meal). This funding is provided through the Attainment Scotland Fund and is allocated directly to schools.

2017 NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The 2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education is now the definitive plan. It brings together improvement activity from both the Delivery Plan and the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan and also includes improvement actions on parental and family engagement in keeping with the commitments within the Delivery Plan.

Appendix B

NATIONAL PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT STEERING GROUP

Al Qalam School
BEMIS Scotland
Children and Young People
Comann nam Pàrant
Education Scotland
Enquire
Families Need Fathers
Families Outside
Fathers Network Scotland
National Parent Forum of Scotland
Parenting Across Scotland
Parent Network Scotland
respectme
Save the Children
Scottish Catholic Education Service
Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network
Scottish Parent Teacher Council
Scottish Traveller Education Programme
Scottish Qualifications Authority
Skills Development Scotland
The Royal Caledonian Education Trust & ADES National Transitions Officer for Service
Scottish Government

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP FOR THIS REVIEW

Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
BEMIS
Educational Institute of Scotland
Education Scotland
Enquire
Fathers Network Scotland
National Parent Forum of Scotland
Save the Children
Scottish Parent Teacher Council
Scottish Government
Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network

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parent children government
national scottish framework
education councils
schools improvement
involvement home learning
important representation
local opportunity home
implementation
scotland forum issues
views continues wider
involving providing
responsibilities recognising
partners community
educators organisations
potential educate mutual
communication pursuit
represent together shared
authorising plan help



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