

The West Partnership presents:

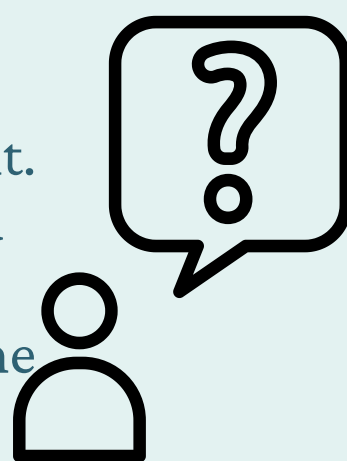
Moorfoot Primary School, Inverclyde

Maintaining family learning culture during COVID19

This storyboard details how Moorfoot Primary continue to promote and support parental involvement in the life of their school. We hear about how the team responded to the Covid19 pandemic by changing their practice to further use digital technology to engage with parents.

What was the problem?

Over a number of years Moorfoot Primary has been developing more effective ways of engaging with families to help them support their children's learning and raise attainment. The school had used Joyce Epstein's 6 types of parental engagement as a framework for improvement. As part of this improvement, an online learning blog had been set up in September 2019 to provide parents with high quality online resources to give them insight into the methodologies and practices used in Moorfoot Primary. The blog had proved very popular. With lockdown in place it seemed even more important to build on sharing learning with parents who were supporting home learning.



What happened?

Using digital technology meant that more parents were being reached. The school Twitter account reached 1900 followers. There were increased numbers of parents interacting with the webinars and videos and more than 100 people regularly responding to Microsoft forms as they could be easily and anonymously accessed. Families reported feeling supported as they could easily find practical support to help them support their children's learning in an easily accessible digital space. Videos rather than written information or even face to face events seemed to better meet the needs of busy, working parents. The school is in discussion with partner agencies such as Inverclyde Communication Outreach Service (ICOS) in creating videos about autism to share with parents. There were also examples of parents contributing to videos, with some sharing tips about how to support home learning.



Why is this important?

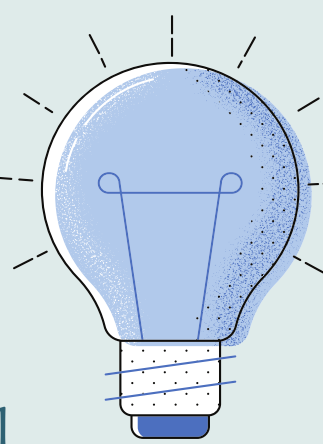
Research has demonstrated the importance of family learning and parental involvement on attainment and learner experience. Positive relationships between home and school have also been found to correlate with positive learner experiences and attainment. Moorfoot wanted to continue their work on parental involvement.



Aims of the change to practice

The project had a number of aims:

- 1) To continue with the strategy to increase parental engagement despite Covid 19 restrictions, work commitments or personal time constraints.
- 2) To use digital technology to continue to provide all parents with high quality online resources that help them support their children's learning.



What did you do?

The team explored how they could adapt their practice using Epstein's parental engagement model (italicised here). For *parenting* there was a focus on offering a better transition family experience by sharing webinars and videos that helped familiarise families and children with the school and staff. For *communication* a weekly SWAY newsletter was developed in partnership with a focus group of parents. Written reports were replaced with more informal termly teacher-parent phone calls. As *volunteering* was impossible within the school, parents were invited (and continue to be invited) during the Education for Work event to share videos or attend pupils online Q & A sessions to talk about work experience. To meet Epstein's *learning at home* criteria, webinars and videos were offered to upskill parents in getting involved in the learning. For example, live Maths sessions were held to support parents in supporting their children. The parent forum was also involved in *decision making* through collecting feedback via a Microsoft Form attached to every weekly newsletter. *Collaboration with the community* was enhanced via the weekly Friday assembly recorded and shared with the whole community.

What are the key points you have learnt?

The team have identified a number of key lessons learnt. Firstly, the team believe that building and sustaining relationships was the core driver of all the work. Using Epstein's model of parental engagement provided an effective framework to build these relationships. Secondly, the team note that a diverse use of digital platforms (YouTube, school website, sways, Twitter and Facebook) was useful, but note that having one central point of contact was helpful. The school used a ThingLink noticeboard as a location where parents could access all information. Thirdly, the team placed importance on being transparent with feedback. The team found value in highlighting negative and positive feedback before sharing how they would respond in the weekly newsletter. Fourthly, the team believed that regularly gathering anonymous feedback from parents via a Microsoft Form normalised the process of parental evaluation.



What next for the project?

The team have identified a number of future steps. Firstly, they intend on continuing to review the parental engagement strategy against Joyce Epstein's model of parental engagement. The team also intends on using digital technology to further involve parents in supporting the curriculum. This could, for example, support children with developing online interview skills and making and sharing videos.

