

The West Partnership presents: Williamsburgh Primary School, Renfrewshire

Responsive Remote Learning during the Pandemic

This storyboard details how the team at Williamsburgh Primary School in Renfrewshire put in place a remote learning programme that responded to parental needs. We hear how the school worked in partnership with parents to develop and enhance their remote learning curriculum among P1 and P2 pupils.

What was the problem?

Williamsburgh Primary school, Paisley, has made a concerted effort to work on parental engagement. Their catchment is diverse, and they contend with a number of challenges imposed by deprivation. Their approach has led to increased parental engagement and has developed avenues for family learning to blossom. The pandemic posed a significant challenge to the every day running of the school. Nevertheless, the team at Williamsburgh were keen to continue their work on parental engagement.



Why is this important?

Parental engagement, often used alongside concepts like parental involvement and family learning, refers to the various ways in which parents engage with their children to support their learning. Research has found that parental engagement interventions can improve the attainment of the pupil and may influence the attainment of siblings too. With pupils at Williamsburgh working remotely, the engagement of parents in their children's learning gained further importance.



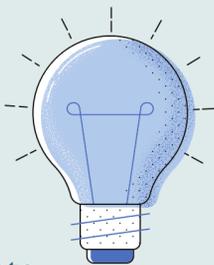
Aims of the change to practice

The project had two main aims:

1) Encourage parental engagement through feedback and evaluation to enable adaptations to service delivery.

Which would..

2) Encourage and maintain children's engagement in remote learning, play and wellbeing.



What did you do?

The school realised that parental engagement was going to be key in effectively delivering remote learning to pupils. They also realised that staff across the school would need to work collaboratively, with management, teachers and support staff each having their own particular role to play. Having access to hardware and connectivity was fundamental to remote learning, so the school's management team (SMT) monitored access across their school community. SMT did this consistently through support workers and weekly wellbeing calls. Prior to lockdown, the school's Early Learning and Childcare Officer (ELCO) had developed a range of educational videos that could be accessed by a QR code. Pupil's had developed their digital literacy in this area and could use this remotely to access learning content. QR codes were used in a remote access letter and also in a tangible resource pack that were collected from school or delivered to the homes of pupils. The packs had learning and play resources which linked to digital content via the QR codes. The school's digital approach prior to the pandemic aided the move to remote learning, with pedagogical principles remaining in place. The school delivered content via their P1 and P2 Glow blogs, with written activities set and links to educational videos provided. Initial feedback from parents suggested that there were some limitations around the predominant use of written content. The team responded by creating a YouTube channel where teachers and the ELCO could develop learning videos. As pupils already had experience of using QR codes, these were used to creatively link pupils to their teachers learning videos. The team also produced videos for parents, which responded to parents queries in how they could support their children's learning.

What happened?

The team's use of feedback from parents continually informed the schools remote learning strategy for P1 and P2. After the first week of remote learning, the team had learnt that parents were at times struggling when they had multiple children. Children appeared to miss seeing their teachers and, at times, didn't follow parental instruction. Some EAL families also struggled to translate written instruction. To overcome these written communication barriers, the school developed their own video content from the 2nd week of lockdown. Teachers and the ELCO developed video content so that pupils could take instruction from their teachers who were also visible in the videos. For families with particular challenges, staff created personalised videos of encouragement. Feedback from parents was positive, with some explaining that the new approach led their children to be more independent learners which allowed them, the parent, to engage when required rather than to lead learning. A principal teacher at the school created weekly slideshows which included pictures of families completing work. The school engaged in a continual process of self-improvement. A responsive culture saw all staff take note of and respond to parental feedback. This agility meant that curriculum developments were always made in partnership with parents.



What are the key points you have learnt?

The team at Williamsburgh have identified a number of key learning points. Firstly, the success of the schools remote learning programme was dependent on capturing the views of pupils, parents and carers and responding to meet their needs. Secondly, the use of QR codes allowed for a continuity of learning that supported independent learning while also allowing parents to focus their engagement. Thirdly, the team found that videos that featured staff allowed for a continuity of learning that significantly aided engagement. The team believe that this pedagogic approach enabled parents with multiple children to juggle learning support. Finally, the team recognise the importance of a collaborative culture among staff. Collaboration between staff was necessary as a response to the pandemic, but also meant that a great volume of professional development took place within the school itself. This collaboration was only possible through the development of open communication between staff.



What next for the project?

The team have identified a number of next steps for their project. Teams has been identified as a potential platform for live meets. They intend on continuing to collaborate with pupils and families after the remote learning period is over. They aim to put in place what they've learnt from remote learning into their post-pandemic learning strategies - especially what they have learned around overcoming written communication barriers. It is hoped that the continued use of QR codes will help in this area whilst continuing to develop pupils digital literacy. Going forward, the school intend on completing an all-staff evaluation of the remote learning approach, which provide a formalised moment of reflection where staff can consider what worked, what didn't and what could be improved. The team are also keen to share their practice at authority level and beyond.



The West Partnership thanks: Vhairi Cochrane, Aileen Mackey, Alison Vandal, and Kamlijit Rai of Williamsburgh Primary
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