

Reaching out to parents

The following ideas and resources are taken from a range of case studies and tools that schools involved have used. Parental Engagement was the most challenging of the areas selected.

NFER produced a useful guide to parental engagement in 2013 which we have included in the resources as well as tools and case studies that project schools have developed.

Key messages from NFER Teacher Guide (NFER 2013)

- Use evidence to choose the best parental engagement strategies for you school
- Give your parental strategies the best chance of working (time/commitment/listening to parents' needs)
- Evaluate the success of parental engagement strategies
- Prioritise communication
- Maximise choice, minimise barriers
- Provide advice, emotional support and training to enable positive parenting (with a non-threatening, non-judgemental approach)
- Work with others
- Don't forget fathers

The Department for Education also produced a lengthy but useful review of best practice in parental engagement in 2011. This may seem a long time ago but much of the information still stands.

The case study vignettes below identify some ways in which schools in primary and secondary school have engaged with parents and families in different ways, using the research findings above as a basis for their project work.

King Edward VII, Coalville used social media as a way of engaging those students, including disadvantaged students, who do not readily commit to additional learning. This included a weekly blog, Twitter and questions posted on Instagram.

Richmond Primary School increased the number of meetings with parents of disadvantaged pupils, rather than relying just on the termly parents' meetings. The additional meetings were less formal and more of a dialogue to build positive working relationships.

Robert Smyth Academy prioritised parents of disadvantaged pupils first when booking appointments for parents' evening, as well as targeting poor attendees, focusing on the EEF toolkit and working with other local schools.

STEP teaching school alliance focused on developing better transition arrangements with pre-schools so that disadvantaged families were more quickly identified and conversations could include the benefits of applying for Early Years Pupil Premium funding as well as building positive relationships with vulnerable families.

Case Study – King Edward VII, Coalville – [click here](#)

Parental Engagement tools and ideas

- Self-evaluation tool – Engaging parents – [click here](#)
- Mapping parental engagement – [click here](#)
- Parental support action plan – [click here](#)

Parental engagement links

NFER research paper

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OUPP01/OUPP01.pdf>

DfE review of best practice

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182508/DFE-RR156.pdf

Ofsted – Unknown children – destined for disadvantage

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/541394/Unknown children destined for disadvantage.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/541394/Unknown_children_destined_for_disadvantage.pdf)

Education Endowment Foundation – parental engagement

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/school-themes/parental-engagement/>