



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

conducted by the National Parent Forum of Scotland



Executive Summary

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

Iain Ellis, Past Chair, NPFS

Background

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

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

Building the capacity of parents is key in raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The various outcomes of parental involvement can be catalysts for changes 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.

Approach to the task

In producing this review and collating the findings, the National Parent Forum of Scotland and Ipsos MORI considered national and international research evidence, and conducted interviews with parents, stakeholders and headteachers. 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 identifies the effectiveness of the Parent Council role, 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 to drive the parental involvement agenda forward.

Conclusions

The key message from the Review is that parental involvement in their child's learning has positive impacts on outcomes for the young person, their families and schools, and helps 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 which require to be taken forward by stakeholders. 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 support a step-change in the quality of parental involvement across Scotland.
- There is a desire to: update and improve key aspects of the Parental Involvement Act (2006); develop a fresh set of guidance, update the 'Engaging Parents and Families' toolkit; and develop further advice and information for parents on Parentzone Scotland.
- There is no desire for statutory decision-making powers to be assigned to Parent Councils.
- Considerable support exists for clarifying the current statutory duties on headteachers and to modernise relevant duties of Parent Councils.
- Work is required on the learning at home strand of the Parental Involvement Act (2006) as well as clarification on what it is and can be.
- Greater promotion of family learning is required.

Operational

- The role and function of Parent Councils requires to be more clearly defined, protected and promoted.
- Levels of financial and other support for Parent Councils require to be consistent.

- Parent Councils require further understanding on the legal responsibilities placed on them and local authorities regarding equalities and diversity requirements.
- The workforce requires to be developed and equipped to work with parents and families. Training and development is required for practitioners to enable them to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence when working with parents.
- Resources at a local authority level to drive forward the parental involvement agenda and support Parent Councils requires to be protected and promoted.