



PDM 8

Developing learning partnerships with parents, carers, families and communities

Aims

- To ensure a welcome for all families and the wider community so that they feel safe, secure and valued
- To establish effective two-way communication with parents, carers and families
- To develop partnerships with parents and carers which involve them as key partners in their children's learning
- To develop partnerships with the wider community which contribute to rich learning experiences

Overview of a suggested professional development programme

Learning and teaching: assessment for learning

PDM 1

Establishing layered curriculum targets as a context for language development

PDM 6

Day-to-day assessment

Learning and teaching: language development and curriculum access

PDM 2

EAL principles, pedagogy and practice: first language as a tool for learning

PDM 3

Integrated planning for language development and curriculum content

PDM 4

Supportive contexts: scaffolding language and learning

PDM 5

Speaking and listening: guided sessions for language development

Conditions for learning

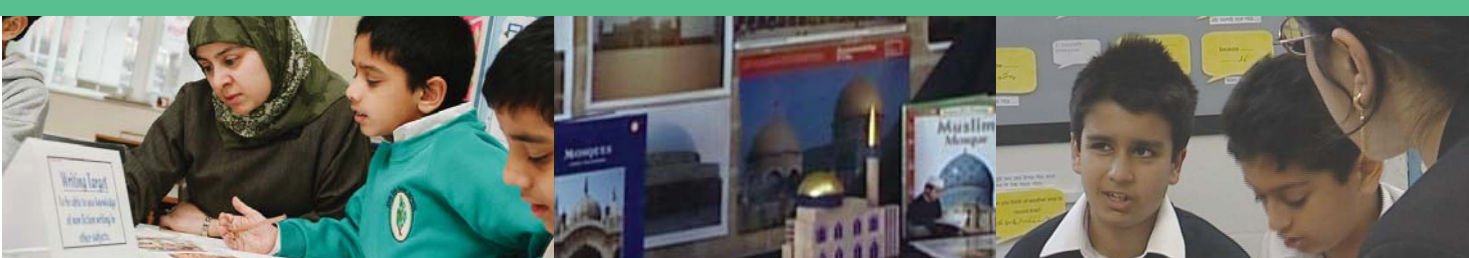
PDM 7

Culture and identity: ethos, environment and curriculum

Partnerships beyond the classroom

PDM 8

Developing learning partnerships with parents, carers, families and communities



Key messages

Note: The term 'parents' includes parents, carers and families.

Effective partnerships recognise:

- that parents are their child's first educators and remain their key educators throughout their school career;
- that most parents want to be involved in their children's education. In a recent study 72% of parents said they wanted more involvement (DfES Research report 332);
- that parental involvement in a child's schooling for a child between the ages of 7 and 16 is a more powerful force than family background, size of family and level of parental education;
- that families and communities have a vital role in developing a confident sense of identity and self-esteem which is crucial for educational success;
- that parents understand their own children best;
- the importance of listening to parents about their concerns and recognising children's achievements beyond school work.

Schools need to take steps to:

- develop a shared understanding across the school of potential barriers to effective partnerships with minority ethnic families and communities as well as strategies to address the barriers;
- ensure that parents and the wider community understand that their children's languages are valued and that the first language has an important and continuing role in learning at school;
- share children's progress and achievements, their curriculum targets and strategies for achieving them;
- ensure that parents know how to support their children's learning at home;
- consult with all parents about school policies, aspirations and expectations regarding achievements, roles and responsibilities.

Suggested activities

Review and reflect on progress since the last meeting.

- What have you done?
- What was the impact?
- What have you learned?
- Share curriculum targets.

- Discuss key aspects of the audit for a 'welcoming school' from the perspective of minority ethnic parents.
- Discuss key aspects of the audit for an 'inclusive school' – do current structures and organisation allow all parents and families to be involved? e.g. times of parents' evenings, educational workshops with interpreters available, recognition of cultural factors which may influence participation.



- Audit provision of interpretation and translation to support effective communication. This provision should aim to include oral, written, formal and informal communication. How can local sources of support be identified?
- Discuss further strategies for involving parents and the wider community in learning at home as well as school – sharing curricular targets and strategies for achieving them; sharing understanding of how teaching and learning of mathematics and literacy across the curriculum are approached in school; importance of talk, particularly in first language.
- Discuss how the expertise of parents and wider community can be harnessed to enrich the curriculum and learning experience for children.
- Discuss how greater support can be provided during extended visits to the family's country of origin and how these might be used to enhance learning.
- Identify the local supplementary schools, community schools and madrasahs and discuss how liaison might be improved to support overall teaching and learning.

Next steps

- Agree your school priority in this area and identify a process for taking action and reviewing progress.

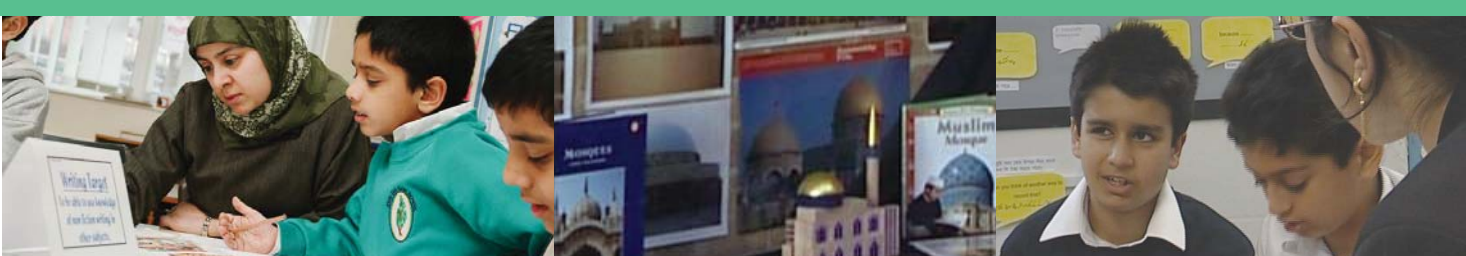
Notes

Specific

- The focus is on developing partnerships with parents, carers, families and communities from minority ethnic heritage. This work will contribute to and enhance existing work on developing partnerships beyond the classroom.
- The success of all activities depends on staff knowledge and understanding about the families and communities – this knowledge informs school actions but also develops further as staff and parents work together.

General

- Arrangements should be made to facilitate participation by part-time staff, EMAG-funded staff and teaching assistants.
- Ensure that key messages are secure and that participants leave with a clear understanding of where they need to focus over the coming half-term.
- Staff who are confident in this area should support other colleagues.
- The activities above are intended as examples. Choose from, and adapt, the suggested activities to fit in with the current priorities for the school as identified in the half-termly whole-school curriculum targets.



Resources and further reading

- *Help your child to learn* – a series of leaflets for parents, for example: *A guide to supporting reading for parents of primary school children* (HYCL7, 2004)
- *Helping parents help their children* (DfES 0126-2004)
- *Involving parents, raising achievement*, training pack and video (PICE/IPRA/TP, 2003) (This pack contains useful tools to audit the school environment)
- *Mathematics targets for pupils: Parents booklets* (DfES, 2001)
- *Parental involvement in multi-ethnic schools*
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement/pics/pics_multiethnic_menu/
- *Parents: partners in learning* (DfES 0747-2004 G; video: DfES 0412-2004; leaflets for parents: DfES 0414-2004)
- *Sure Start: For Everyone*, Inclusion Pilot Projects Summary Report, May 2004 (IPPSUMMARY)
- *Taking an active interest in your child's learning* (DfES 1023-2004 for Year 2; DfES 1024-2004 for Year 6)
- Desforges, C. with Abouchaar, A. (2003) *The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: a literature review* (DfES Research report 433)
- Moon, N. and Ivins, C. (2004) *Parental involvement in children's education* (DfES Research report 589)

