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Parent ENGage
The Parent Voice

Lewisham's Children & Young People Select Committee 24th January 2019

Parent ENGage views on Lewisham Learning & School Improvement



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Supporting Pack – Contents and Narrative

1. About Parent ENGage – leaflet

2. Lewisham Learning

- a. Parent ENGage 008 Briefing Paper to Members in June 2018;
- b. A draft Community Newsletter that Parent ENGage submitted to the Interim Director of Lewisham in November 2018;

Commentary: After GCSE preliminary results were known, the Council published a summary of the Secondary School Improvement Programme to put into the secondary school booklets for Y6 parents. There is a summary on Lewisham website, yet Lewisham Learning is still not public, transparent or widely known by parents (and the community).

3. Parent ENGage Positive Parents

- c. Leaflet to help parents make choices about secondary school selection;
- d. Lewisham Education Week summary;

Commentary: Parent ENGage members have a vested interest in Lewisham primary and secondary schools; our children attend them. We do our best to support and promote our schools; some schools are more receptive than others. It may surprise some that Lewisham parents are capable of blue-sky thinking, one of the results being our proposal to create Lewisham Education Week.

4. Parent ENGage Parent Resilience Programme

- e. Summary of the Parent Resilience Programme;

Commentary: More blue-sky thinking. Following a Parent ENGage public meeting on mental health with speakers from Mind and Lewisham Young Advisors, in September 2017, we approached the Council at the beginning of 2018, to ask them to fund continued learning for parents on Resilience & Wellbeing, so that Parent ENGage Parent Volunteers could provide peer-to-peer support for Lewisham parents in Lewisham schools.

5. Home Schooling (Elective Home Education)

Commentary: A Lewisham parent explains why she decided to home school her child.

6. CONCLUSION – It's all been said before

Parent **ENGage** Lewisham

“The parental voice, the missing piece of the education jigsaw in Lewisham”



Who are we?

Parent Engage is a growing parent network. We are parents in Lewisham who want to be a constructive and positive voice to work with all the education stakeholders so all our children in Lewisham get the best from their education. We believe parents are currently not represented in the Lewisham education system, and we want to be bring that voice.

Why are we?

Our children attend Lewisham schools, and as parents we have experienced the highs and lows of the education system, through our experiences we felt that communication, accountability and transparency of the Lewisham education system had reduced, at many levels.

It is our strong belief that children in Lewisham should have access to a good education within Lewisham as a minimum. We want to see Lewisham leading the way nationally with outstanding education in all schools and with all stakeholders working together positively and openly.

How do I join?

To join parent ENGage email us at:

Parentengage_lewisham@outlook.com

Its free to join us, but the difference made is priceless!



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Briefing 008 – June 2018

Lewisham Learning (incorporating Lewisham Secondary Challenge)

This is a summary of a meeting that Parent ENGage had with Michael Roach, Interim Director of Lewisham Learning on 15th June 2018. Please also refer to the links at the bottom of the page where more documents can be accessed.

- Michael Roach is the Head Teacher of John Ball Primary School, and Interim Director of Lewisham Learning. He officially started in post in the Interim Director role in September 2017, and we understand that the permanent role will be advertised in Q4 2018. He acknowledged that communication with parents, is not where it should be, for both Lewisham Secondary Challenge and Lewisham Learning.
- Lewisham Learning covers ALL Lewisham schools, and is funded by top slicing from the Dedicated School Grant, as agreed by Lewisham Schools Forum. All academies have joined and will have contributed funding directly. The Lewisham Secondary School Challenge has been retro fitted into the Lewisham Learning model. Lewisham Council is also part of Lewisham Learning.
- Atlas Training School worked with Lewisham secondary school heads to submit a bid for funding from the DfE £140m Strategic School Improvement Fund (established in 2017) and won a grant of £750k in January 2018 for the Lewisham Secondary Challenge. The Grant expires in April 2019, and what is not spent must be returned. There is no guarantee that similar grants will be available in the future, so the Lewisham Secondary Challenge must also create an exit strategy, and ensure that money is well targeted, value for money and creates sustainable solutions.
- All Lewisham secondary schools received peer reviews in Autumn 2017. The teams included an officer from Lewisham Council, and a Challenge Partner provided by ATLAS Training School. In Autumn 2018, another round of peer reviews will take place, and for All Through Schools, will include a review of both primary and secondary phases.
- More bids for funding have been made by Lewisham Learning to DfE but will not learn whether bids have been successful until July, making planning potentially difficult. We were informed that bids have been made for:
 - (1) improve reading in primary schools;
 - (2) improve governance in schools;
 - (3) joint bid with Lambeth & Greenwich on SEND, and
 - (4) 6th form bid, led by Christ the King.
- Under Lewisham Learning, ALL schools are RAG rated (Red, Amber, Yellow, Green). Targeted focus on Red and Amber schools by Lewisham Learning. Schools rated Green will receive support from the School Improvement Board to prepare for next Ofsted inspections (many have not been inspected for years) and particularly with focus on curriculum offering as Ofsted have recently been looking at this in schools. Three years after an Outstanding Ofsted inspection, the School Improvement Board will review the school (in depth, off-site reviews and on-site lasting around 3 – 5 hours) and perform governance review (effectiveness of governance).

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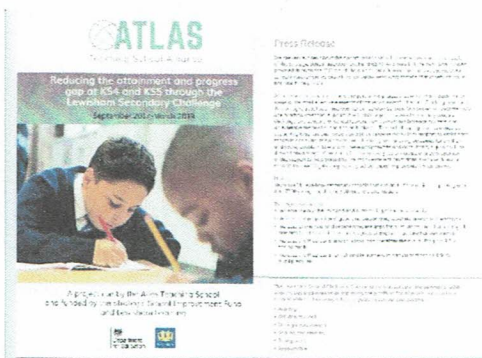
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- Lewisham Learning have plans to create Learning Hubs relating to non-core subjects. Schools are invited to create 3 Hubs and apply for funding from Lewisham Learning to create centres of excellence, with SMEs helping other schools, becoming mentors and "Go To" leaders, performing research and designing CPD for sustainable solution. The Hub must be made up of leaders / SMEs from all phases of education. Lewisham Learning has total funds of £30k and Learning Hubs are:
 - o Humanities
 - o Creative Arts
 - o SEND & Inclusion
- PE offered help to promote Lewisham Learning, and improve communications with parents. Cautioned that communication with parents needs to be relevant to be effective.
- At the end of the meeting, Michael gave us 3 glossy packs, which he had previously described as Parent communications. However, in our view, these are more beneficial for schools.



USEFUL LINKS

Creation of Lewisham Learning

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s52270/05%20CYP%20Lewisham%20Learning%20Partnership%20Update%20-%2020130917.pdf>

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s55491/APPENDIX%20A%20LLP.pdf>

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s55490/Establishment%20of%20Lewisham%20Learning%20Partnership.pdf>

Lewisham Learning Strategic Board Meeting April 2018
<http://schoolsservices.lewisham.gov.uk/Article/55733>

Lewisham Learning Community Newsletter 1 18/19

@LewishamLearn

What is Lewisham Learning?

Lewisham Learning is a schools' led partnership established by Lewisham school leaders and Lewisham Council to deliver high quality school improvement to all Lewisham schools. This also incorporates Lewisham Secondary Challenge, which won a significant amount of funding from the DfE, to reduce the attainment and progress gaps in all Lewisham secondary schools.

Lewisham Learning is led by Michael Roach, Interim Director. [What is the Governance for this group??]

We are gathering the evidence of the impact of our work. Early indications tell us that our collective endeavours over the last year have resulted in an overall improved picture for education in Lewisham. All of our nursery, primary and special schools have self-evaluated their Lewisham Learning category and this had been agreed by the School Improvement Board. For schools that have rated themselves red and amber, all of the support required for the year has been agreed and is already underway. This process will also be undertaken for our secondary schools. The support from the Secondary Challenge project, has now been agreed for each school and this work continues at a pace.

Improved outcomes for pupils

- Early Years Foundation Stage – top 5 in England, and well above the national average
- Primary – improvements in Y1 Phonics and Y6 SATs results, above the national average
- Secondary GCSE results – overall improved outcomes, particularly in maths. Improvement in Attainment 8 has pushed Lewisham up the London performance table, above Lambeth & Greenwich
- 6th Form A level results – broadly in line with national average

Launch of the Primary Reading Project

In September we were very excited to see the launch of the Primary Reading project which involves over 30 schools. In partnership with the ETAL teaching school and the Hackney Learning Trust, we are delivering Continuous Professional Development to school leaders to then take the methodology back to their schools. The Destination Reader (Juniors) and Daily Supported Reading (Infants) approaches have been developed by Hackney schools and are now being used by many schools across the country. The project is being paid for by Lewisham Learning.

Promoting our Secondary Schools

Over the last 6 months Lewisham Council have funded a part time communications post as part of a drive to support the marketing of our secondary schools. Lewisham Learning has supported this work in various ways, including a printed brochure about secondary schools sent to all Y6 parents; Lewisham Life article featuring 4 target secondary schools; 'Meet the secondary parents' evenings at 3 primary schools in conjunction with Parent ENGage; the creation of an admissions animation to support parents.

We have worked hard to ensure primary colleagues are aware of the improvements across the secondary sector and we are promoting the message to families to go and visit our schools.

New Post 16 project

To further enhance the work of the Secondary Challenge project and support schools in improving the quality of Post 16 provision, Lewisham Council has agreed to fund an additional piece of work with post 16 providers.

Continuous Professional Development ("CPD") offer to schools and governing bodies

We are developing our central CPD offer back to schools and governing bodies. All of this training is free to maintained schools as part of our offer. A diary of events is scheduled from November 2018 to 2019.

Support for new Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Heads of School

As part of our offer back to schools we are currently running an induction, mentoring and coaching programme to support new colleagues into their roles. This is also part of our offer back to schools.

Inclusive Leadership Course

Our four teaching schools have successfully bid for funding to run a new course targeted to support BAME leaders take the next step on their leadership journey. Please contact the directors of the teaching schools for more information.

Rathfern Research Hub

Lewisham Learning is pleased to welcome Rathfern Primary School's designation as a Chartered College of Teachers Research Hub in Lewisham. At the recent launch of the Research Hub at Goldsmith College, Rathfern welcomed Dame Alison Peacock, CEO of the Chartered College of Teachers, to speak about the importance of this work. We are discussing with Rathfern how to ensure we can fully utilise this level of expertise in Lewisham to ensure maximum impact on learning and teaching in our schools.

Naheeda Maharasingam, Headteacher at Rathfern said: *"Lewisham Learning has supported the closing of the theory practice divide by including Rathfern CCT Research Hub as part of Lewisham's Strategic Offer. As a result of Lewisham Learning's support we look forward to developing a strong teacher research movement in Lewisham."*

Association of Education Partnerships

Education Partnerships are becoming increasingly common as local authorities and groups of schools decide how best to deliver school improvement and professional learning. As a result, the Association of Education Partnerships has been set up by Christine Gilbert (former head of Ofsted) and Baroness Estelle Morris. An inaugural conference took place in September bringing together partnerships and organisations from across the country. Lewisham Learning are now an associate member of the association. You can find out more here: <https://www.aepa.org.uk>

Lewisham Learning on Twitter @LewishamLearn

We are now live on Twitter! We have 125 followers and would love more of you to track what is going on via our twitter feed. We are tweeting about what we are doing as well as following all Lewisham schools who are on Twitter and retweeting many of their tweets. We are also tweeting job adverts for senior leader posts across the Local Authority as well as tweets of interest to our stakeholders.

Choosing a Secondary School

Choosing a primary or secondary school for your child can be a daunting and confusing time for parents, we understand- we have been there too!

Parent ENGage have put together these handy “thinking points” from parent’s experiences and questions when it comes to choosing a school for your child.

The key piece of advice from Parent ENGage is **GO AND LOOK**. Ask questions, and don’t be afraid to ask more questions.

CHARACTER

Does the school suit my child’s personality, strengths, learning style, expand on their interests? Does the school suit my child emotional needs as well as academic?

LEARNING PROGRAMME

What is the curriculum on offer? What are the extracurricular opportunities? What are the opportunities for developing curriculum interests? Are there opportunities to learn outside of the classroom?

SCHOOL STRENGTHS

What are the strengths of the school? What are the overall outcomes for past students? Will my child learning needs be met, developed and expanded? Will the learning environment motivate and challenge my child? Do the Children in the school look happy and Engaged?

MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT

How is achievement measured by the school? What are the progress 8 scores? How does the school communicate achievements? What standards are expected? The OFSTED report can give you a snap shot of a school in a moment in time, and parent view can also give you an overall view, but always be realistic, how old is the report? Ask the school what changes/improvements have occurred up to date.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

What communications are in place for parent/school links? Do you feel welcome and listened to? Are you able to see what you want to see, could you ask questions you wanted to ask?

DISTANCE

How far from my home is the schools? What are the transportation options?



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Summary of Parent ENGage Proposal for Lewisham Education Week

- Y6 parents have approximately 6-7 weeks to make one of the most important decisions about secondary schooling for their child(ren). It is too short.
- Traditionally, primary schools invite local secondary school heads into their schools to promote their schools to Y6 parents. Lewisham Admissions team will often be in attendance.
- In 2018, secondary school parents made themselves available in a few primary schools, and at a few secondary schools open days, to talk to Y6 parents about why they had chosen their schools and respond to questions. There was overwhelming support for this approach from Y6 parents. However, it is not a sustainable model.
- Visiting Secondary School Open Days is also made challenging by the fact that a few primary schools undertake their School Journey trips during this period. Some secondary schools have been more accommodating than others in arranging for these parents to visit their schools when Open Days have finished.
- We therefore considered an alternative approach to bring all secondary schools together into one venue, along with charities supporting schools, plus parent groups, as a first step to help parents understand what each secondary school had to offer in terms of specialisms, curriculum, culture.
- We submitted our proposal to Lewisham Council in September 2018, and are pleased to be meeting a Council Officer on 25th January 2019 to discuss this proposal further, and all being well, bring it to life in early summer 2019 to aid current Y6 parents and also to start the process early for Y5 parents.

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Summary of Parent ENGage Parent Resilience Programme

- The Programme is organised by Parent ENGage; Parent Volunteers are trained by BLG Mind, funded by Lewisham Council;
- This is a PILOT programme, it is the first of its kind involving parents;
- 11 Parent Volunteers are part of the Programme;
- Five 3-hour workshops with Mind have been hosted by Forest Hill School and Prendergast Lady well School;
- The last workshop was on 18th January 2019 and we now organising the first training session in a primary school;
- Five primary schools have expressed an interest in the Programme and 2 secondary schools;
- Schools that wish to participate will determine which cohort of parents they think will benefit i.e. YR, Y6, Y7 and determine a date and time to suit and promote to their parents;
- Parent ENGage will appoint 2 – 3 Parent Volunteers to train parents in the participating school on Wellbeing and coping techniques in a session lasting 1.5 hours. It is a condition that the SENDCO also attends;
- The aim of the session is for parents to understand the 5 Ways of Wellbeing in order to help themselves and their children to cope with stresses, regardless of the situation i.e. external factors, school etc;
- A follow up session will be arranged in the same academic year to refresh and build on the first session;
- It is important that it is recognised that Parent Volunteers are not experts in mental health, social services etc. This Programme is to support parents and to signpost them to other support mechanisms, such as Lewisham Council's Family Information Services;
- Feedback will be obtained before and after the session and we will also work with the school to ascertain whether the training has improved outcomes;
- Parent Volunteers have undertaken Safeguarding training and are supervised by Mind.

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2008-2020 Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy –

"By raising standards in our schools and colleges and by **supporting parents**, more of our children and young people can reach their full potential." (Page 18)

April 2016 - Lewisham Education Commission Report - Extracts relating to parent engagement and parent views

"**Parents want good schools where their children thrive, are safe and achieve** well. The places in Lewisham's least popular schools will only be filled when parents are confident that improvement is clearly underway." (Page 11).

"However, if, as we believe, performance in secondary schools improves over the next few years, **fewer parents would be inclined to opt for a school preference out of the borough**. Secondly, even if performance does not improve significantly, we do not see the incentive for neighbouring boroughs to create places for Lewisham pupils." (Page 11).

"Many schools **use the views of pupils, parents and the community to inform planning and action for improvement**. **Secondary and all-through schools should review their processes to ensure greater involvement, particularly of parents.**" (Page 18).

"Lewisham's Secondary Challenge would be established and resourced to give intensive support across the sector for a period of 3 years. It would seek to lift aspirations across the sector and to persuade young people, their teachers, **parents** and key stakeholders not only that they can achieve more but that they can acquire the sorts of skills, knowledge and confidence to make the most of the opportunities open to them in London." (Page 56)

CYP Select Committee Papers – extracts relating to Young Advisors & Secondary Challenge

10.11.2016 "At their meeting on 17 October 2016, the Advisors explained that there were children in their peer groups in primary school whose parents had required them to take the 11+ and they believed this led to 'brain drain' going into Year 7 as the most able children moved onto grammar schools outside the borough, or to the independent school sector. They also referred to negative perceptions of Lewisham secondary schools as an issue, recommending that schools focus more widely than on GCSE results to promote themselves such as strength in performing arts, or sporting success." (CYP Select Committee Agenda Reports Pack)

19.04.2017 One of the Principles of Collaboration of the Lewisham Secondary Challenge: "invest in effective communication across the collaborative, with staff, with respective governing bodies, with key partners and **most importantly with the families and communities we serve.**" (CYP Select Committee Agenda Reports Pack)