

Building the Curriculum At Bankton Primary School



Strategy Paper 10 Family Learning

Rationale for Family Learning @ Bankton Primary School



“Developing and sustaining effective partnerships between the home, the community and the school is, without question, the most important component of school improvement”

Alma Harris and Janet Goodall (2008)

The Bankton Learning Community

Bankton Primary School is a school in the heart of the community of Dedridge in Livingston, West Lothian. The catchment area covers part of Dedridge and Adambrae. Bankton Primary is included in West Lothian Council Decile Band 5 due to the school's free meal equivalent. Parts of Dedridge have well established extended families and many of the parents attended Bankton Primary themselves, so there is a strong and healthy affiliation and attachment to the school. However, many of our parents are not fortunate enough to have extended family nearby. They are housed in Private Lets and have very little family support. These are parents who need the school's active engagement in order to build their capacity to help their child succeed. It is our aim, moving forward to ensure that in Bankton PS :

- We aim to develop Family Learning Programmes which will support children's progress and achievement
- We aim to empower parents to be active participants and effective contributors to the life of the school and to school improvement
- We aim to build capacity in our parents to support their child with home and life long learning in a variety of ways through accessible support materials as well as practical experiences

What is Family Learning and what will this look like @ Bankton PS?

Family Learning and Parental Engagement are current priorities within the Scottish Government's Delivery Plan for Education, The National Improvement Framework. As such, it is an integral part of school improvement @ Bankton PS and is regularly evaluated for effectiveness and impact.

Family learning encourages all family members across the generations to learn together. It is a powerful vehicle for learning which helps everyone within the family to develop positive attitudes to learning and may influence attitudes for life. In Bankton PS, our family learning will be intrinsically linked to each of the priorities in the School Improvement Plan. Parents as learners will be integrated at the planning stage each year, ensuring they are an important part of school improvement.

Family learning will also recognise the important role parents have to play as the first educators of their child. They will be encouraged at all stages to actively help their child to apply the skills they are learning in a real life context.

Family learning in Bankton will uphold our school values of inclusion and co-operation. All family learning will be open to every parent, regardless of culture, race or relationship.

Family learning will be embedded in the school's Growth Mindset practices and will celebrate mistakes as marvellous learning opportunities, allowing families to participate in learning together within a low threat, low risk environment.

Family learning events will operate within an ethos of welcome and mutual respect, in particular for parents who have had a negative experience of school themselves

Getting It Right for Every Child

Across all stages of the school there are children with significant additional support needs. We aim to support these pupils and their families through focused observation, early intervention and targeted support. Strong partnerships will be established from the earliest stages in Nursery to ensure that parents are clear about their supportive role in their child's education. Parents at all stages will be supported to help their child through 'bite-size' tutorials and workshops on specific aspects of Literacy and Numeracy to enable them to play an important part in raising attainment for all.



Current Structures in Place for Family Learning @ Bankton PS

Parental Engagement at Early Level

We aim to engage with parents and make them feel welcome and comfortable from their first point of contact with Nursery. An initial visit for parent and child will be organised where the safety and wellbeing of the child will be emphasised, ensuring an ethos of trust and confidence is in built from the start of our relationship with a new family.

Partnership working with Health Visitors and Speech and Language Therapists will allow the Nursery Team to provide targeted support to vulnerable children and their families through Storysacks, Literacy Packs and Rhyming Books.

Universal support will be provided through curriculum evenings and Stay and Play, where the Nursery team can emphasise and model the importance of early play and adult-child interactions in developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Through targeted initiatives such as The Big Bedtime Read, Nursery staff will model the importance of questioning to develop children's understanding of vocabulary within stories, building capacity in parents to close the vocabulary gap.

Targeted Support in P.1 and Beyond

Gifting Events:

P.1 Parents are invited along to a meeting as soon as their child begins P.1. At this meeting they are given a 'gift bag' of items which can be used for home learning. They are also shown how to use the items to help support their child with early literacy and numeracy. Several weeks later they are invited back with their gift bag to 'check-in' with school staff to discuss their home learning. Further activities are structured around the gift bag in the classroom.

1-1 Tutorials:

The Support for Learning Teacher provides a range of opportunities for family learning in order to build capacity in parents to support their child. This begins with a Support for Learning Showcase event where pupils demonstrate their literacy strategies and 'teach' their parents. This is then followed up by 1-1 tutorials with the SFL teacher / parent and child to further customise and personalise strategies / support / techniques and resources which could be utilised at home.

PATPAL Events (Pupils as teachers, parents as learners)

These events are linked to an aspect of school improvement e.g. Numeracy. Each event is organised during the school day and lasts for an hour. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms

to learn alongside their child. Teachers operate these sessions in a variety of ways including carousels of activities, expert learner sessions where the pupil is the teacher, pupil / parent challenges. The feedback from these events is always incredibly positive as they are organised within an ethos of mutual respect and provide visible learning within school improvement priorities.

Bite-Size Tapas Sessions:

Staff work in pairs to prepare workshops for parents and children on a variety of topics. Sessions last for no more than 30 mins. Parents choose 2 sessions to attend with their child from a 'Menu'

Showcase Events:

Showcase events can be organised by individual class teachers to showcase learning or by a group of teachers working together to showcase a topic or learning across the curriculum. In addition to children 'presenting' their learning, these events also include 'expert learner' sessions where pupils explain and demonstrate their learning by involving parents in activities.

Learning Festivals:

Over the past two years we have taken family learning into the heart of the community through our Cluster Family Learning Festivals. This has shown families from our diverse Cluster Schools that all families benefit from Family Learning. Each learning festival has used pupils as 'expert learners' demonstrating both challenge and support strategies within both literacy and numeracy. By providing guidance and strategies for both challenge and support we are able to engage with a wider range of families within our diverse Cluster.

Support Materials:

Following each of our PATPAL events we provide parents with a support booklet, uploaded to our school BLOG giving clear guidance on how to support their child in Literacy or Numeracy activities. Support materials are also available to support family learning across the curriculum including Health and Wellbeing (Emotion Works), Internet safety and Additional Support Needs.

In all we do in Bankton it is our aim to develop real and active partnership with all families, involving them in engaging family learning experiences which will help to develop positive attitudes and skills for life.

Jacqueline Stewart

January 2017

