

Evaluation of the Parental Engagement Toolkit

Final report for the City of London Corporation

April 2025

Professor Emma Wainwright

Professor Kate Hoskins

Ms Hannah Froome

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Evaluation Objectives.....	3
3. Evaluation Process	3
3.1 Evaluation Overview	3
3.2 Parent Evaluation.....	4
3.3 Teacher Evaluation	4
3.4 Data Analysis.....	4
4. Evaluation Findings	4
4.1 Parent Evaluation Profile	4
4.2 School and Student Profiles	5
4.3 Parent Evaluation: Quantitative Findings	7
4.4 Parent Evaluation: Qualitative Findings	9
4.5 Teacher Evaluation: Findings	12
5. Conclusions	13
References	16
Appendices.....	17

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the 'Parental Engagement Toolkit: accessible tools for the City Family of schools' (CoLC, 2024 a & b). The City of London Corporation (CoLC) commissioned The Parenting Circle to devise two toolkits to be used in primary and secondary schools across the City Family of Schools.

The toolkits come at a time when parental engagement is under scrutiny, most especially as a result of increased school absenteeism since the COVID pandemic (McDonald et al., 2023). The toolkits are intended to “promote positive home/school liaison for the benefit of children”, drive opportunities for social mobility (CoLC, 2024a & b: 1) and improve outcomes for students and families. They are aimed at supporting all those working within schools, including teachers, senior leaders, and governors.

Parental engagement describes the relationship between parents and their children's education in general, such as what a parent can do to foster a positive learning environment, whether that is at home, school or in other community settings (Reach More Parents, 2025). While parental involvement may be the first step towards engagement, parental engagement refers to parents being directly and actively engaged in their child's learning at home, school, and in the wider community (Goodall, 2022; Goodall and Montgomery, 2014).

The importance of parental engagement has been increasingly evidenced through research. Children who have parents engaged in their learning have been shown to have better student development and behaviour, improved skills, self-esteem, and higher attendance. Studies have further demonstrated a strong correlation between the participation of parents in the education of their children and their children's academic achievements, well-being and overall commitment to education (Castro et al., 2015; Emerson et al., 2012; Lyubitskaya and Polivanova, 2022; Parentkind, 2024).

Children learn and develop in different environments, and this begins in the home and before children enter school. Parental engagement is therefore considered to be beneficial to a child's learning both inside and outside school as parents play a critical role in providing learning opportunities (Emerson et al., 2012).

2. Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation focuses on the use of the toolkits across the 10 City of London Academies Trust (CoLAT) schools/ colleges with the aims of:

1. Investigating the impact of the toolkits on parents' and teachers' experiences of parental engagement.
2. Evidencing and identifying the factors that lead to positive parental engagement.
3. Assessing the overall effectiveness of the toolkits to promote home-school engagement.

This was a survey-based evaluation and the Brunel research team worked with the CoLC to recruit parents/ carers, teachers and senior leaders to participate. Reference to parents in this study includes anyone with the main responsibility for caring for a child at a CoLAT school.

3. Evaluation Process

3.1 Evaluation Overview

A two-phase evaluation was conducted with parents, followed by a short teacher evaluation. The evaluation process followed the timeline of toolkit roll-out across CoLAT schools/ colleges. Prior to commencement, the evaluation received ethical approval from Brunel to ensure informed consent, participant anonymity and confidentiality.

3.2 Parent Evaluation

The evaluation with parents was undertaken in two phases with matched baseline and follow-up surveys. Both surveys were designed following a close reading of the toolkits to ensure they linked to different aspects highlighted as important to parental engagement.

The baseline survey was undertaken towards the start of the academic year in term 1 (October-November 2024). The survey consisted of a series of demographic questions, quantitative banks of questions measuring engagement, confidence and knowledge, and open-ended questions to capture parents' views (see appendix 1).

The follow-up survey was undertaken with a matched sample of respondents in term 2 (late February-March 2025). It repeated the quantitative bank of questions, and carried qualitative questions on perceived changes in parental engagement in recent months (see appendix 2). The follow-up survey was aimed at establishing significant change with regard to engagement interventions implemented by schools/ colleges since baseline survey completion.

The 10 CoLAT schools/ colleges were each tasked with recruiting 15 parents to the baseline survey. A total of 54 parents completed the baseline survey. The Brunel project team directly contacted baseline respondents for completion of the follow-up survey. There were 45 matched survey completions for the follow-up survey. All 45 participants were offered a £20 shopping voucher as a thank you for participating in the evaluation.

3.3 Teacher Evaluation

Following the parent surveys, a short evaluation survey with teachers was conducted in March 2025. This was aimed at assessing teacher/ senior leader experiences of using the toolkits, delivering engagement interventions and their perceived effectiveness. The survey consisted of a series of demographic questions, quantitative banks of questions on the toolkits and parental engagement, and open-ended questions on use, effectiveness of, and improvements to, the toolkits (see appendix 3). The Brunel team contacted toolkit leads to disseminate the teacher survey within their schools, and followed up with three email reminders. A total of nine teachers completed the survey.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data was analysed by the research team using SPSS with question banks subject to paired sample t-test to compare the mean scores between the baseline and follow-up data. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant. Data analysis were conducted using the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics. A small sample size limited the statistical tests that could be undertaken. Qualitative data was analysed thematically and extended verbatim quotations are included in italicised text. The data is presented to ensure no school (other than respondent numbers) or individual can be identified.

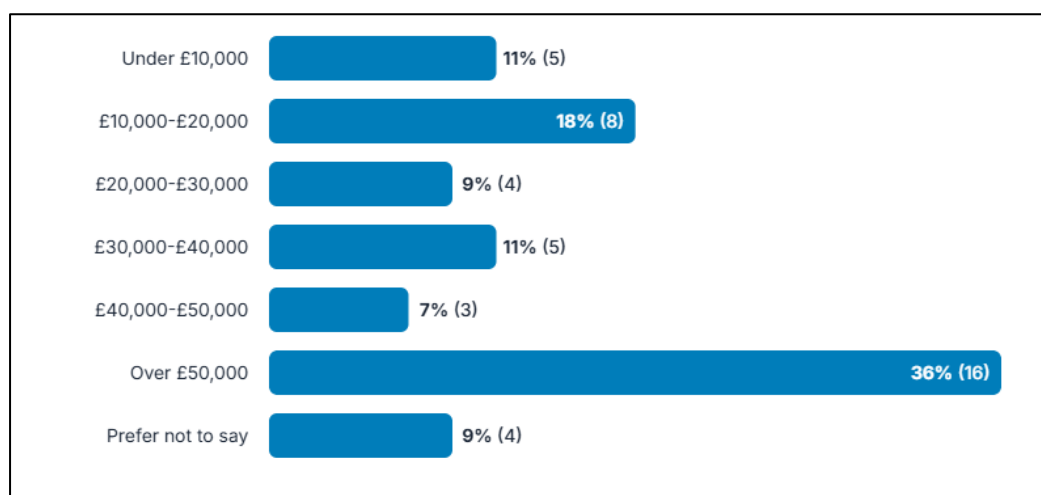
4. Evaluation Findings

4.1 Parent Evaluation Profile

There were 45 matched completions between baseline and follow-up surveys. 87% (n=39) respondents were female, 13% (n=6) male. Half (50% n=27) of respondents described themselves as White, with 21% (n=10) of Black or mixed Black ethnicity. 42% (n=19) described themselves as Christian, followed by 36% (n=16) of no religion, 13% (n=6) Muslim and 4% (n=2) Jewish.

Chart 1 shows the variation in annual income. While 11% (n=5) of respondents fell into the lowest income bracket, over a third (36% n=16) were in the highest income bracket.

Chart 1: Annual household income

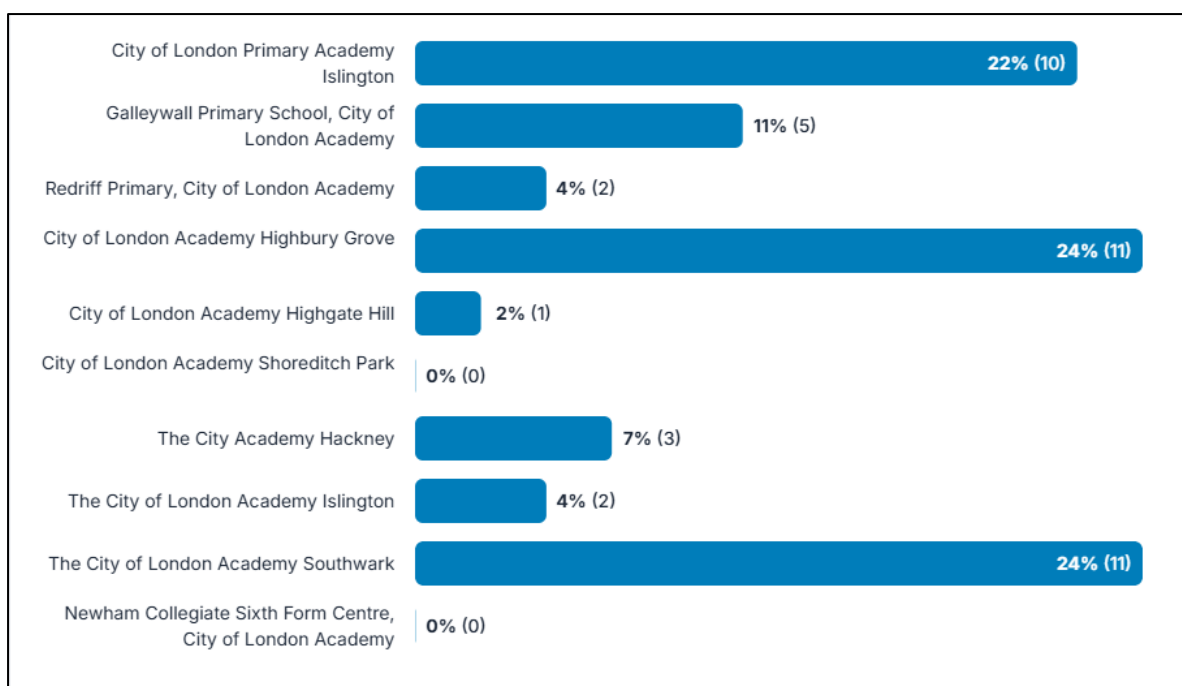


40% (n=18) of parents had a child receiving Pupil Premium, that is pupils who are recorded as eligible for free school meals, have been recorded as eligible in the past 6 years, or children who previously were looked after by a local authority or in state care. 11% (n=5) of parents/ carers were registered disabled and 24% (n=11) had English as an additional language.

4.2 School and Student Profiles

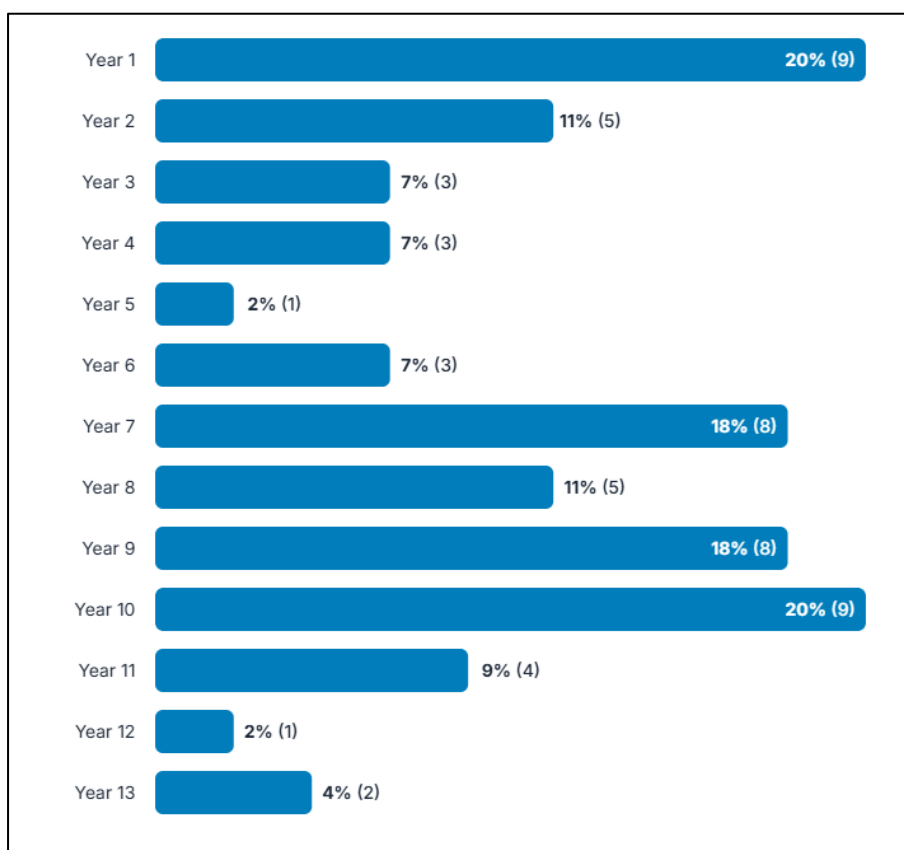
As shown in chart 2, responses came from eight of the 10 schools that make up the CoLAT. Parents from three schools, City of London Primary Academy Islington, City of London Academy Highbury Grove and The City of London Academy Southwark, made up 70% (n=32) of the total respondents.

Chart 2: CoLAT schools attended by child/ children



Respondents had a total of 61 children from years 1 to 13. As shown in chart 3, while all year groups were represented, parents with children in 'starter' years 1 (20% n=9) and 7 (18% n=8), along with years 9 and 10 (38% n=8 and n=9), comprised the largest year groupings. Key stages 1 (years 1 and 2) and 3 (years 7-9) are more strongly represented in this sample.

Chart 3: Year group of child/ children



38% (n=17) of parents reported having a child with a Special Educational Need.

4.3 Parent Evaluation: Quantitative Findings

Both surveys had three matched quantitative sections: 1. Engagement 2. Confidence 3. Knowledge.

Each of the three sections comprised statements to be 'rated' in terms of agreement, confidence and knowledge levels. The findings show that for each section, there was no overall positive or negative significant differences between baseline and follow-up surveys. This suggests that use of the toolkit has not positively affected parents' engagement with, their confidence in, or knowledge of, their child's school/ learning.

The baseline and follow-up responses are presented by percentages in tables 1-3. The first number in each column relates to the baseline survey and the second number to the follow-up survey. For example, in the baseline survey 31% of parents strongly agreed they felt engaged with their child's learning, and in the follow-up survey this rose to 33%

Table 1: Engagement statements

% agreement of parents by baseline/follow-up (don't knows excluded)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel engaged with my child's learning	31/33	44/51	13/16	9/0	0
I have a good relationship with my child's school	47/42	31/44	18/9	0/4	4/0
I feel a part of the school community	22/29	40/36	20/22	13/11	4/2
The school communicates effectively with me	33/33	38/33	16/24	7/9	7/0
The school involves parents in its activities	27/24	44/33	22/31	4/7	2/2
My opinion is valued	20/24	31/31	36/29	9/9	4/4
The school celebrates difference and diversity	44/32	31/43	18/18	4/2	0/2
The school supports children's positive mental health	41/27	27/45	18/18	5/5	5/2
The school celebrates children's achievements	44/47	47/42	7/9	0/0	0/2
It is important that all children attend school as much as possible	82/76	18/20	0/4	0/0	0/0

In terms of engagement (table 1), there was no significant positive change between baseline and follow-up surveys, and none of the individual statements showed any significant positive change. However, the findings do show that all follow-up survey responses carry a majority agree response, the lowest being 55% for 'My opinion is valued'. The highest follow-up survey percentage agreement is for the statements: 'The school celebrates children's achievements' (89%), 'I have a good relationship with my child's school' (86%), 'It is important that all children attend school as much as possible' (86%), and 'I feel engaged with my child's learning' (84%).

Table 2: Confidence statements

% confidence of parents by baseline/follow-up (don't knows excluded)

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Neither confident or unconfident	Not very confident	Not at all confident
--	----------------	------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------	----------------------

Speak with teachers about your child's learning	47/60	38/33	9/2	4/2	2/2
Support your child with their learning at home	38/33	51/44	9/13	2/4	0/4
Create a clear and consistent homework routine	27/34	40/34	18/20	11/7	4/5
Reinforce school-based behaviour at home	29/27	36/42	24/9	4/9	2/9
Ensure your child attends school	88/87	9/13	0/0	0/0	0/0
Participate in school activities and events	44/36	29/40	16/20	7/4	0/0
Ensure online safety	51/44	31/33	9/22	7/0	2/0
Encourage an active healthy lifestyle	51/60	31/31	13/7	2/0	2/2

In terms of confidence (table 2), there was no significant positive change between baseline and follow-up surveys. One statement within this confidence bank showed a positive significant change and that was in relation to parents' confidence to speak with teachers about their child's learning. While this can be linked to schools' use of the toolkit, it may also reflect the later point in the academic year where parents are more familiar with class teachers compared to at the start.

While there was only one statement which showed significant positive change between baseline and follow-up, the results do show high levels of parental confidence across all statements. The highest follow-up survey percentage agreement is for the statements: 'Ensure your child attends school' (100%), 'Speak with teachers about your child's learning' (93%), 'Encourage a healthy lifestyle' (91%). The follow-up survey carries a majority 'confident' response, with the lowest confidence response linked to home-based activities: 'Create a clear and consistent homework routine' (64%) and 'Reinforce school-based behaviour at home' (69%).

Table 3: Knowledge statements

% agreement of parents by baseline/follow-up

	Good knowledge	Reasonable knowledge	Basic knowledge	Limited knowledge	No knowledge
The academic year, including testing/examination schedules	31/31	36/40	13/22	20/7	0/0
School extracurricular activities/clubs/enrichment opportunities	38/44	36/31	18/16	7/7	2/2
Visit school (e.g. school events, assemblies, performances, sports days, coffee mornings etc)	51/47	24/33	16/13	4/0	4/7
The transition between schools (primary to secondary, or post-secondary)	32/41	25/32	23/16	14/5	7/7
The transition from one year to another	29/30	22/43	29/9	11/11	9/7

In terms of knowledge (table 3), there was no significant positive change between the baseline and follow-up surveys, and none of the individual statements showed significant positive change. However, the findings show that knowledge levels are high with good/ reasonable knowledge of over 70% for all statements in the follow-up survey. The results also indicate shifts in the direction of knowledge with increasing levels of knowledge, notably in relation to transitions.

While tests for significant positive changes suggest that the parental toolkit has had no impact in changing responses across the three banks of questions, these findings do show strong patterns of engagement, confidence and knowledge across the sample which CoLAT schools can build on as they develop interventions to improve parental engagement.

Both surveys asked about external/ support services schools have signposted parents to. The baseline survey had nine responses, and this had increased to 14 in the follow-up survey, demonstrating some upsurge in schools making parents aware of support beyond what is offered through the school itself. The majority of services focused on special educational needs and mental health (speech and language therapy, CAMHS) but also included music and sporting activities, childcare, holiday programmes, and further learning support resources.

4.4 Parent Evaluation: Qualitative Findings

The follow-up survey carried qualitative questions on what the school had done in recent months to encourage parents to both engage with their children's learning and with their children's school. These questions were aimed at determining whether parents were aware of any changes in parental engagement activities/ communications implemented due to schools using the toolkits.

28 positive responses were received relating to what schools had done in recent months to encourage parents to engage further in their *child's learning*. As shown in table 4, responses can be split into those relating to learning activities, communications on progress, homework, and parental support:

Table 4: Looking back over the past few months, what, if anything, has the school done to encourage you to engage further in your child's learning?

Themed qualitative findings

Learning activities	Reading marathons Extra projects and learning Further English classes Online maths ESB project
Communications on progress	Parents evenings Weekly postings Phone calls on child's progress Emails on student progress
Homework	Better homework system Letters regarding homework
Parental support	Parents workshop Emotional support coffee morning

The majority of responses were positive, with activities and communications positively received. Two parents with children with SEN gave particular praise for recent engagements:

The school has been great, it's been honest as to where my children are at and to where they expect them to be. The school have regular printed passwords and log ins for online

homework and always touched base with me on pickups about the day and what I can do at home to further help. They have showed me techniques that perhaps best suit autistic individuals in terms of learning to read and phonics.

I have received feedback this week from the SEN department with an update to [child's] student summary and the changes within it that have come about after [child] has completed a recent questionnaire based on problems with memory and thinking and memory and thinking strategies and I have been made aware of all the changes between the outcome of this one and the last one that he completed. I feel that I am updated and supported very well.

However, other responses were less positive, and flagged limitations to current offerings:

We have had one parent meeting for 10 minutes - this isn't sufficient enough for parents to get a good understanding of how the child is doing in school.

There is so much more school could do to engage parents in our child learning.

25 positive responses were received relating to what schools had done in recent months to encourage parents to engage further with their *child's school*. As shown in table 5, responses can be split into general communications, school functions, school events and co-curricular external activities.

Table 5: Looking back over the past few months, what, if anything, has the school done to encourage you to engage further with your child's school?

Themed qualitative findings

General communications	Newsletters Online learning demonstration Informal teacher feedback
School functions	Parents evenings Assemblies New starters assembly
School events	School productions/ concerts School fair/ fate Fundraising events
Co-curricular external activities	School trips and visits

The responses to both these questions suggest that though some change in efforts to enhance parental engagement could be discerned, these were not consistent across schools and across the sample of responses. In particular, different types of engagement between primary and secondary school were notable, with primary parents remarking on the multiple ways they engage:

The school has appointed me a community councillor for a set year group. I am invited to event coordinated meetings on upcoming events and trips. And I feel listened to with ideas and education suggestions.

In contrast, parents of children at secondary school are looking for more opportunities to engage with school:

Do more for parents to come in and support children, see achievements and work.

Two final questions asked what else schools could be doing to encourage parental engagement in both their child's learning and their child's school. Tables 6 and 7 highlight the themed qualitative findings.

27 responses were received relating to what schools could do to further engage parents with their *children's learning*. As shown in table 6, responses can be broadly split into activities, information and support, and timings.

Table 6: What, if anything, could the school do to further engage parents with their children's learning?

Themed qualitative findings

Activities	More open days Drop-in meetings Workshops to support homework Direct teacher communication
Information and support	More information on children's learning Support for parents with online learning 'Notices' on subject content for revision Information about homework 'Guides' on how best to support children's learning at home More online content or recorded meetings Direct teacher communication beyond parents' evenings
Timings	More regularly parent-teacher meetings Limitations of short parent evening slots

In relation to the linked themes of activities and information and support, responses were commonly phrased as what parents wanted 'more of'. Some of the points related to general information, others related to particular learning support, for example, in relation to children's revision, particular examinations, or items of homework. Some parents had specific ideas of what schools could do and at what points, while others simply requested 'more activities':

Hosting hands-on sessions where parents learn how to support their child's education (e.g., helping with homework, understanding the curriculum, revision techniques).

An idea could be to have a parent assembly in the beginning of year 11 to inform parents of the timelines for mocks, other tests as well as the GCSE exam schedule + how the school and we as parents can support our children over the year.

In relation to timing, the challenges of parent attendance were noted, whether due to childcare or working hours, as well the regularity of meetings with school and the limitations of engagement through short parents' evenings. Again, there is some difference in response between parents of primary and secondary children, with the latter feeling most in need of further points of engagement in their child's learning:

To gain more insight into my child's learning as parents evening is a short time. Would like to engage through follow up email or telephone conversation.

The response below highlights the desire parents have to engage with their children's learning, but perceived barriers as to what can make this challenging. The example here refers to diversity and approachability of staff:

Teaching staff is predominantly white and middle class - appreciate this is difficult to change as depends on cohort of teachers. However, the school staff team lack diversity and therefore can feel more difficult for non-white middle-class parents to feel confident and comfortable approaching the school and not being seen as “the problem”. Not all teachers are approachable.

22 responses were received relating to what schools could do to further engage parents with their children’s school. As shown in table 7, there is some duplication in responses with the above question on learning engagement.

Table 7: What, if anything, could the school do to further engage parents with their children’s school?

Themed qualitative findings

Activities	Year/ term ahead meetings Coffee morning to give updates Parent visits to school Social events to build a school community Invitation to parents to speak with/ present to students
Information and feedback	Take/ ask for suggestions from parents More emails and effective communications

Qualitative comments captured both what parents wanted from school, but what they felt they could potentially offer to the school themselves, pointing to a desired ethos of reciprocity:

Ask what we can do for them.

Provide opportunities for parents to meet teachers and staff outside of formal parent evenings, allowing for open conversations in a relaxed setting.

Allow parents voices to be heard and be incorporated in the school curriculum.

At the moment the school is doing good. They ask surveys, the parents have WhatsApp groups for each year, the school are up to date with information and it’s easy to access. They have members of staff that parents can ask questions and chat to on the gate and playground it is very community based with coffee mornings and interventions.

4.5 Teacher Evaluation: Findings

A total of nine responses from four schools were received, with the sample including senior leaders and classroom teachers. Questions on the parental toolkit show that only three staff had received/ looked at the toolkit (representing two schools), six had not (representing two schools and which account for 26% of the parent sample). This is a very limited sample size but indicates that schools have not been working with the toolkit in the anticipated way. This gives context to the quantitative findings from the parental surveys where no positive significant differences were found across the three question banks.

The teacher survey asked questions relating to the toolkit (including on purpose, confidence in and ease of use, information and strategies offered), and on general parental engagement (its importance and challenges, schools’ need for guidance, school strategy). However, with only nine

responses, it is not possible to draw conclusive findings. The quantitative question bank on general parental engagement found that 7/9 responses agreed that parental engagement was a pressing issue and 8/9 teachers agreed/ strongly agreed that schools need further guidance on how to support parental engagement.

Teachers' qualitative responses on the use of the toolkit reported the following:

Good tool to help us reflect on our current engagement levels, and things that might want to try going forward.

The toolkit seemed more just information and not easy to follow actionable steps.

Make almost like a to do list a step by step guide.

Due to the current cost of living crisis parents/carers find it difficult to attend in person events as majority are working / live far away from school. School staff are less keen to hold events that are later in the evening due to long working hours. Late event timings suit working parents best. Parents receive lots of emails, these should be condensed into a weekly bulletin to avoid confusion and ensure engagement /feedback is obtained.

This provides some insight into the current effectiveness and limitations of the parental engagement toolkits and wider engagement strategies used by schools. Teachers acknowledged that the toolkits serve as helpful resources for reflecting on existing engagement levels and identifying potential areas for improvement. However, a common theme among responses was that the toolkits are overly focused on providing background information rather than guiding users through practical, easily implementable steps. As such, it was recommended that they be revised to include a clearer structure, ideally in the form of a step-by-step guide or actionable checklist. This would help schools translate ideas into tangible actions and encourage more consistent engagement practices.

As a final question, teachers were asked to provide further comments regarding parental engagement in their schools and responses highlight a number of barriers and challenges in relation to hosting in-person events and communications. Many parents and carers are experiencing increased financial pressures and reduced flexibility in their schedules and, as a result, attending school events in person has become more difficult, especially for those who work full-time or live at a considerable distance from the school. School staff also face time constraints, including extended working hours, which limits their capacity or willingness to organise and facilitate events in the evening. This creates a mismatch in availability, whereby evening events are generally more accessible to working parents, yet less feasible for school staff to deliver. Communication between schools and families was also identified as an area in need of improvement. Parents currently receive a high volume of emails, often from multiple school departments or staff members, which can lead to information overload and confusion. This fragmented approach to communication can negatively impact parents' ability to engage with key messages or respond to requests for feedback.

5. Conclusions

In the UK education system, teacher toolkits offer valuable support in building stronger partnerships between schools and families. By promoting clear, coordinated communication and activities across year groups and key stages, toolkits contribute to a whole-school approach to engagement. Strong parental partnerships have been shown to positively impact attendance, behaviour, and academic attainment, making them an important asset in driving educational success.

This evaluation has generated a set of relevant data on parental engagement in relation to the CoLC parental engagement toolkits, and this conclusion draws together key findings to respond to the three evaluation aims.

1. Toolkit impact on engagement experiences

The evaluation findings show that the toolkits have not had any clear positive and significant impact on parents' and teachers' experiences of parental engagement. However, as the teacher evaluation indicates, schools have not been using the toolkits in the anticipated way, and therefore the lack of change between baseline and follow-up parent surveys can be explained.

2. Evidencing and identifying factors leading to positive engagement

Though the impact of the toolkits on engagement is not clear, the evaluation data does evidence and identify factors leading to positive engagement. Parental engagement, confidence and knowledge are strong across the CoLAT schools, and responses demonstrate parents' keenness and desire to engage both with their children's learning and their school. This is in line with previous qualitative work undertaken by the evaluation team for the CoLC which underscored the desire for enhanced parental engagement (Wainwright et al, 2024). Parents consider engagement as reciprocal, based on a two-way engagement with school, marking a shift away from more modest parental involvement. Reciprocal engagement therefore allows parents to actively feed into, support, and be a part of, the school and their child's learning.

3. Assessing the overall effectiveness of the toolkits

Given the sample sizes and results of the teacher survey that show schools have not been using the toolkits, this evaluation is unable to assess their overall effectiveness. However, the teacher survey does indicate areas for toolkit refinement, most notably in relation to developing a clear set of resources and actionable steps for schools to implement. Such resources can include communication aids, culturally inclusive practices, and activities that align with the curriculum, helping to bridge the gap between home and school. Moreover, resources are needed to encourage educators to feel empowered to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment, encouraging parental engagement in their child's learning and school. These are points Ofsted and the Department for Education increasingly highlight as vital to pupil progress and wellbeing.

Toolkit potential

While teacher toolkits are designed to support stronger home-school partnerships, many schools face challenges in using and implementing them effectively. A key challenge is lack of time and resources. Teachers already face heavy workloads and may not have the capacity to consistently use additional tools or strategies that require planning, communication, and follow-up with families.

Limited or inconsistent training and support are further issues. Toolkits need to be introduced with sufficient professional development, to ensure that educators understand how to apply them in diverse family contexts. This is particularly challenging in schools with high levels of cultural and linguistic diversity, where generic communication strategies may not resonate with all families.

Moreover, limited parental availability can hamper engagement efforts. Parents may face barriers such as long work hours, lack of confidence and resources, or discomfort with the school system based on past negative experiences. Without careful adaptation to these realities, toolkits may fail to bridge the gap.

Lastly, institutional priorities and funding constraints can deprioritise parent engagement initiatives, especially when schools are under pressure to meet academic performance targets. Without leadership and staff engagement and understanding in the aims of a toolkit, implementation can be uneven and partial in terms of impact.

References

- Castro, M., Expósito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E., and Gaviria, J. L. (2015) Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 14, 33–46.
- City of London Corporation (2024a) *Primary school parental engagement toolkit: accessible tools for City Family of Schools*, City of London Corporation.
- City of London Corporation (2024b) *Secondary school parental engagement toolkit: accessible tools for City Family of Schools*, City of London Corporation.
- Emerson, L., Fear, J., Fox, S., and Sanders, E. (2012) *Parental engagement in learning and schooling: Lessons from research*. Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau.
- Goodall, J. (2022) Parental engagement, in Jeynes, W. (Ed) *Relational Aspects of Parental Involvement to Support Educational Outcomes: Parental Communication, Expectations, and Participation for Student Success*. London, Routledge. pp. 22-38.
- Goodall, J. and Montgomery, C. (2014) Parental involvement to parental engagement: A continuum. *Educational Review*, 66, 399–410.
- Lyubitskaya, K., & Polivanova, K. (2022) Parental Engagement: Why Parents in Russia Choose Homeschooling and What Problems They Have to Solve. *Journal of School Choice*, 16(2), 191–209.
- McDonald, B., Lester, K. J., & Michelson, D. (2023). ‘She didn’t know how to go back’: School attendance problems in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic—A multiple stakeholder qualitative study with parents and professionals. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93, 386-401.
- Parentkind (2024) *How to build effective home-school partnerships*.
<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/assets/resources/Parentkind-ASCL-NAHT-guidance-Building-effective-home-school-partnerships.pdf>
- Reach More Parents (2025) Parental Engagement. <https://www.reachmoreparents.com/parental-engagement#:~:text=When%20children%20have%20parents%20who,of%20a%20need%20for%20re direction>
- Wainwright, E. Hoskins, K. and Tallentire, J. (2024) *City Family of Schools: parents’ views of future educational priorities: a report for the City of London Corporation*, Brunel University London.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Baseline Survey

City Family of Schools: home-school engagement evaluation

You are invited to take part in an online survey. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the survey is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. The consent form and survey questions follow this information.

What is the purpose of the study? The aim of this research is to evaluate home-school engagement. Research is needed to understand the diversity of parents/ carers experiences when engaging with their child's school.

Why have I been invited to participate? You have been invited to take part in this survey as you are a parent/ carer of a child(ren) currently in a City of London Academies Trust school/ college and over 18 years of age.

Do I have to take part? Participation is entirely voluntary, and the decision to take part is yours. Participation will consist of two surveys – one in October and one in January. Each survey will take 15 minutes to complete. There is no obligation for you to complete the surveys – completion is entirely voluntary, and it is up to you to decide whether or not you take part in this research. By completing the surveys, you are giving consent to taking part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason. Any participant can withdraw their data up to June 1st 2025.

Please note, a decision not to take part or to withdraw will in no way affect your child's schooling or your relationship with your child's school.

What will happen to me if I take part? If you agree to participate, please complete the 15-minute survey below. You will then be asked to complete a second survey in January 2025.

Are there any lifestyle restrictions? There are no lifestyle restrictions associated with this research.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? There are no anticipated disadvantages or risks associated with taking part in this research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part? Taking part will enable you to further reflect upon your child(ren)s education and learning. You will also receive a £20 Amazon shopping voucher at the end of the second survey in January 2025 as a thank you for sharing your views.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential? Anonymised data will be retained confidentially in a secure password-protected location on the Brunel University London network for up to ten years and may be used as the basis for future research, in line with University policy.

All information collected about you during the course of the study will be kept strictly confidential. Our procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of data are compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018; however, if evidence of harm or misconduct comes to light, then, in line with research guidelines, confidentiality will have to be broken. We will tell you at the time if we think we need to do this, and let you know what will happen next.

The data will be retained until December 2025 after which it will be securely destroyed. Any information about you which leaves the University will have all your identifying information removed. With your permission, anonymised data will be stored and may be used in future research – you can indicate whether or not you give permission for this by way of the Consent Form.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recording be used? You will not be recorded. The questionnaire data will be analysed to produce findings from the research.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The results of this research will be evaluated and shared with the City of London Academies Trust and the City of London Corporation to inform their education strategy. Results will also form the basis of academic publications. Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about the study.

Who is organising and funding the research? This research is funded by the City of London Corporation. The research is organised by Professors Emma Wainwright (emma.wainwright@brunel.ac.uk) and Kate Hoskins (kate.hoskins@brunel.ac.uk) from the Department of Education, Brunel University London.

What are the indemnity arrangements? Brunel University London provides appropriate insurance cover for research which has received ethical approval

Who has reviewed the study? This study has been reviewed by the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, Brunel University London.

Research Integrity Brunel University London is committed to compliance with the Universities UK [Research Integrity Concordat](#). You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from the researchers during the course of this research.

Contact for further information or complaints

For further information, please contact: Professors Emma Wainwright (emma.wainwright@brunel.ac.uk) and Kate Hoskins (kate.hoskins@brunel.ac.uk)

For complaints, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee: Dr Katja Sarmiento Mirwaldt, cbass-ethics@brunel.ac.uk

(* compulsory question)

1. I have read the invitation paragraph *

Yes

No

2. I am over the age of 18 *

Yes

No

3. I understand that I can withdraw my data up until January 2025 *

Yes

No

4. I agree that my data can be anonymised, stored and used in future research in line with Brunel University's data retention policies *

Yes

No

5. I agree to take part in this study *

Yes

No

6. Which of the following CoLAT schools does your child/ do your children attend? *

City of London Primary Academy Islington

Galleywall Primary School, City of London Academy

Redriff Primary, City of London Academy

City of London Academy Highbury Grove

City of London Academy Highgate Hill

City of London Academy Shoreditch Park

The City Academy Hackney
The City of London Academy Islington
The City of London Academy Southwark
Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre, City of London Academy

7. What is your sex? *

Male
Female
Prefer not to say

8. What is your age? *

18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65-74
75 years or older
Prefer not to say

9. What is your ethnic group? *

Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background:

White: English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British
White: Irish
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller
White: Roma
Any other White background
Asian or Asian British: Indian
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British: Chinese
Any other Asian background
Black, Black British: Caribbean
Black, Black British: African
Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background
White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian
Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background
Arab
Any other ethnic group

10. Is your child receiving Pupil Premium? (Pupil Premium is for pupils who are recorded as eligible for free school meals, or have been recorded as eligible in the past 6 years, or children previously looked after by a local authority or other state care) *

Yes
No
Don't know

11. What is annual household income? *

Under £10,000
£10,000-£20,000
£20,000-£30,000
£30,000-£40,000
£40,000-£50,000
Over £50,000
Prefer not to say

12. Are you registered disabled? *

Yes

No

13. Do you have English as an Additional Language? *

Yes

No

Don't know

14. What CoLAT year group is your child (children) in? Please select all that apply. *

Years 1-13

15. What is your religion? *

No religion

Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominations)

Buddhist

Hind,

Jewish

Muslim

Sikh

Other, please specify

Answer the following in relation to your child/children at a CoLAT school:

17. To what extent do you agree with the following: *

I feel engaged with my child's learning

I have a good relationship with my child's school

I feel a part of the school community

The school communicates effectively with me

The school involves parents in its activities

My opinion is valued

The school celebrates difference and diversity

The school supports children's positive mental health

The school celebrates children's achievements

It is important that all children attend school as much as possible

Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree or disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ don't know

18. What, if anything, could the school do to improve your child's experiences of being in school?

19. What, if anything, could the school do to improve your child's experiences of learning?

20. How confident do you feel to: *

Speak with teachers about your child's learning

Support your child with their learning at home

Create a clear homework routine

Reinforce school-based behaviour at home

Ensure your child attends school

Participate in school activities and events

Ensure online safety

Encourage an active healthy lifestyle

Very confident/ Fairly confident/ Neither confident or unconfident/ Not very confident/ Not at all confident/ don't know.

21. Which of these statements best describes how knowledgeable you feel about: *

The academic year, including testing/ examination schedules

School extracurricular activities/ clubs/ enrichment opportunities

Visiting school (e.g. school events, assemblies, performances, sports days, coffee mornings etc.)
The transition between schools (primary to secondary, or post-secondary)
The transition from one year group to another
Good knowledge/ Reasonable knowledge/ Basic knowledge/ Limited knowledge/ No knowledge

22. Does your child have a Special Educational Need? If yes, please answer questions 23-24. If no, please go to question 25. *

Yes/ No

23. If your child has Special Educational Needs, to what extent do you agree with the following:

My child is well supported at school?

Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree or disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ don't know

24. If your child has Special Educational Needs, what, if anything, could the school do to improve your child's support?

25. What, if anything, would improve your confidence in relation to your child's learning?

26. What, if anything, would encourage you to engage more with your child's school?

27. What, if any, external services/ support services have the school signposted to you?

Thank you for taking part in the survey.

Please leave your contact details below.

These details will remain strictly confidential to the evaluation team at Brunel University London and will not be shared with any third party. The evaluation team will contact you again in January to complete a shortened version of this survey and, upon completion, provide you with a £20 Amazon voucher.

Name:

Telephone no.:

Email address:

Appendix 2: Follow-up Survey

City Family of Schools: home-school engagement evaluation

The City Family of Schools is interested in evaluating home-school engagement to better support schools and parents/ carers with children's learning. This is the second of two surveys and should take 5 minutes of your time. Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. All responses will be compiled together and analysed as a group. After the completion of this survey, the project team will be in touch by email to offer you a £20 Amazon voucher as thanks for your participation.

This survey is being conducted by Professors Emma Wainwright and Kate Hoskins at Brunel University of London. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Emma or Kate: emma.wainwright@brunel.ac.uk or kate.hoskins@brunel.ac.uk
(* compulsory question)

Thank you

1. To what extent do you agree with the following: *

I feel engaged with my child's learning
I have a good relationship with my child's school
I feel a part of the school community
The school communicates effectively with me
The school involves parents in its activities
My opinion is valued
The school celebrates difference and diversity
The school supports children's positive mental health
The school celebrates children's achievements
It is important that all children attend school as much as possible
Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree or disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ don't know

2. How confident do you feel to: *

Speak with teachers about your child's learning
Support your child with their learning at home
Create a clear homework routine
Reinforce school-based behaviour at home
Ensure your child attends school
Participate in school activities and events
Ensure online safety
Encourage an active healthy lifestyle
Very confident/ Fairly confident/ Neither confident or unconfident/ Not very confident/ Not at all confident/ don't know.

3. Which of these statements best describes how knowledgeable you feel about: *

The academic year, including testing/ examination schedules
School extracurricular activities/ clubs/ enrichment opportunities
Visiting school (e.g. school events, assemblies, performances, sports days, coffee mornings etc.)
The transition between schools (primary to secondary, or post-secondary)
The transition from one year group to another
Good knowledge/ Reasonable knowledge/ Basic knowledge/ Limited knowledge/ No knowledge

4. Does your child have a Special Educational Need? If yes, please answer question 5. If no, go to question 6.

*

Yes/ No

5. If your child has Special Educational Needs, to what extent do you agree with the following:

My child is well supported at school?
Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree or disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ don't know

6. What, if any, external /support services have the school signposted to you?

7. Looking back over the past few months, what, if anything, has the school done to encourage you to engage further in your child's learning?

8. Looking back over the past few months, what, if anything, has the school done to encourage you to engage further with your child's school?

9. What, if anything, could the school do to further engage parents with their children's learning?

10. What, if anything, could the school do to further engage parents with their children's school?

Thank you for taking part in the survey.

Please leave your contact details below.

The evaluation team will be in touch soon to provide you with a £20 Amazon voucher.

These details will remain strictly confidential to the evaluation team at Brunel University of London and will not be shared with a third party.

Name:

Telephone no.:

Email address:

Appendix 3: Teacher Survey

City Family of Schools: parental engagement evaluation

You are invited to take part in an online survey. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the survey is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. The consent form and survey questions follow this information.

What is the purpose of the study? The aim of this research is to understand teachers' experiences of the parental engagement toolkit, and their understandings of parental engagement more broadly.

Why have I been invited to participate? You have been invited to take part in this survey as you are a teacher currently working in a City of London Academies Trust school/ college.

Do I have to take part? Participation is entirely voluntary, and the decision to take part is yours. Participation will consist of a short online survey. There is no obligation for you to complete the survey – completion is entirely voluntary, and it is up to you to decide whether or not you take part in this research. By completing the survey, you are giving consent to taking part. If you decide to take part you are free to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason. Any participant can withdraw their data up to March 31st 2025.

What will happen to me if I take part? If you agree to participate, please complete the 10-minute survey below.

Are there any lifestyle restrictions? There are no lifestyle restrictions associated with this research.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? There are no anticipated disadvantages or risks associated with taking part in this research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part? Taking part will enable you to further reflect upon parental engagement.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential? Anonymised data will be retained confidentially in a secure password-protected location on the Brunel University of London and may be used as the basis for future research, in line with University policy. All information collected during the course of the study will be kept strictly confidential, including which school you work at. Our procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of data are compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018; however, if evidence of harm or misconduct comes to light, then, in line with research guidelines, confidentiality will have to be broken. We will tell you at the time if we think we need to do this, and let you know what will happen next. The data will be retained until December 2025 after which it will be securely destroyed. Any information about you which leaves the University will have all your identifying information removed. With your permission, anonymised data will be stored and may be used in future research.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The results of this research will be evaluated and shared with the City of London Academies Trust and the City of London Corporation to inform their thinking around parental engagement. Results will also form the basis of academic publications. Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about the study.

Who is organising and funding the research? This research is funded by the City of London Corporation. The research is organised by Professors Emma Wainwright (emma.wainwright@brunel.ac.uk) and Kate Hoskins (kate.hoskins@brunel.ac.uk) from the Department of Education, Brunel University of London.

What are the indemnity arrangements? Brunel University of London provides appropriate insurance cover for research which has received ethical approval.

Who has reviewed the study? This study has been reviewed by the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, Brunel University of London.

Research Integrity Brunel University of London is committed to compliance with the Universities UK Research Integrity Concordat. You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from the researchers during the course of this research.

Contact for further information or complaints

For further information, please contact: Professors Emma Wainwright (emma.wainwright@brunel.ac.uk) and Kate Hoskins (kate.hoskins@brunel.ac.uk)

For complaints, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee: Dr Katja Sarmiento Mirwaldt, cbass-ethics@brunel.ac.uk

(* compulsory question)

1. I have read the invitation paragraph *

Yes

No

2. I am over the age of 18 *

Yes

No

3. I understand that I can withdraw my data up until March 2025 *

Yes

No

4. I agree that my data can be anonymised, stored and used in future research in line with Brunel's data retention policies *

Yes

No

5. I agree to take part in this study *

Yes

No

6. Which of the following schools do you work at? (please note, this information will not be used in the write up of research findings)

City of London Primary Academy Islington

Galleywall Primary School, City of London Academy

Redriff Primary, City of London Academy

City of London Academy Highbury Grove

City of London Academy Highgate Hill

City of London Academy Shoreditch Park

The City Academy Hackney

The City of London Academy Islington

The City of London Academy Southwark

Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre, City of London Academy

7. How long have you worked at your current school?

Under 2 years

2-5 years

5+ years

8. What is your sex?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

9. What is your ethnic group?

White: English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British

White: Irish

White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller

White: Roma

Any other White background

Asian or Asian British: Indian

Asian or Asian British: Pakistani

Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi

Asian or Asian British: Chinese

Any other Asian background

Black, Black British: Caribbean

Black, Black British: African

Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background

Arab

Any other ethnic group

10. What is your current role in the school?

11. Have you received/ looked at a copy of the 'Parental Engagement toolkit: accessible tools for the City Family of Schools'?

Yes (if yes, go to question 12)

No (if no, go to question 20)

12. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements:

I understand the purpose of the toolkit

I feel confident in using the toolkit

The toolkit is easy to use and navigate

The toolkit offers useful information for schools and teachers

The toolkit will be useful for my professional development

The toolkit offers useful tools to support parental engagement

The toolkit will strengthen engagement with parents

I feel confident that the toolkit will improve parental engagement in my school

The toolkit will support the school in developing a coherent approach to parental engagement

Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree or disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ don't know

13. Which sections of the toolkit, if any, have you used? Tick all that are relevant:

Challenges

Inclusion

Communication

Transitions

Role Models

Community

Not sure

None of the above

14. Which sections of the toolkit, if any, have you found most useful? Tick all that are relevant:

Challenges

Inclusion

Communication

Transitions

Role Models

Community

Not sure
None of the above

15. What, if anything, have you used from the toolkit to enhance your knowledge and understanding about parental engagement?

16. What, if anything, have you used/ implemented from the toolkit to encourage parental engagement?

17. If you have used/ implemented anything from the toolkit, how effective do you consider this to have been?

18. What has been your overall experience of using the toolkit? Please note any positives and/ or negatives.

19. What, if any, changes or improvements could be made to the parental engagement toolkit to make it more useful for schools?

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Parents' engagement with school is a pressing issue

Parents' engagement with their children's learning is a pressing issue

Schools need guidance to better support parental engagement

It is becoming more difficult to engage with parents

My school has a coherent strategy to support parental engagement

Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree or disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know

21. Do you have any further comments on parental engagement generally or parental engagement in your school specifically?

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

Contact Details

Professor Emma Wainwright

Department of Education

Emma.Wainwright@brunel.ac.uk

Professor Kate Hoskins

Department of Education

Kate.Hoskins@brunel.ac.uk