

CELCIS REACH: Kieran Morrell on Parents in Partnership at Auchenharvie Academy

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Kieran Morrell, Family Learning Worker, talks about how Parents in Partnership (a model for parental involvement in the school curriculum) is having a real impact on parents and pupils at Auchenharvie Academy in Ayrshire., Family Learning Worker, talks about how Parents in Partnership (a model for parental involvement in the school curriculum) is having a real impact on parents and pupils at Auchenharvie Academy in Ayrshire.

I'm Kieran Morrell, I am a family learning worker for all can Auchenharvie Academy in North Ayrshire. The Parents in Partnership program that has been running in Auchenharvie in the last year has been a huge success. The aims of this program were to include parents within the school and within the children's education. We wanted parents to feel as if they were part of the school and the child's journey through secondary (school). The outcomes for the child as we can see from our group have been completely different as all families are different, but each parent is reporting back to us improvement within the home, within the school and for them as well – within the home and within the school.

I came in to this school as the model was being piloted and straightaway coming into the school, I could see this parent group that existed and were doing great. The interesting part for me was when the parents were talking about how they were before they had done the program. I actually assumed they were all lying at first because it was so bizarre. The transformation that they said they'd gone through - and you could actually see it within their relationships with each other, and the relationships from the school. I would come into school as a new member of staff, introducing myself and I would have the parents then coming up and speaking to the teachers as if they had known them for years, which was great to see.

I am known currently organizing my own Parents in Partnership program for a new batch of parents as we have a new intake of first years coming in. We will be using the same model because we can see how effective

that model has been and we also want to be able to evaluate it, because although we know that all families are different, so we want to make sure we're not doing one-size-fits-all, and that does have the flexibility for parents. And in a school like this, with teachers who are more than on board and a great head, it will be no issue at all.

I would say the benefits for the children; they do come down and see the parents when they are in. There seems to be an excitement when they're in the school – less this is my school don't come in and with that eagerness, when parents are with teachers, you can see that is a benefit with young people and the staff. So, if there are any concerns around the child's development or education, they know the parent they can go to which is a huge benefit for the child. They might not be aware of that benefit because of the relationship with the teachers and the parents, but it's now there and it will be there through their whole education at Auchenhavrie.

When I started the programme they had just finished a block of Spanish and the parents in the next block were looking at well-being. So, meeting this group for the first time, they said to me was 'Remember to bring your gym stuff' so speaking to these parents and looking at what they had done prior to this, they seemed that they wanted to do a health and well-being block for themselves. The most surprising part for me has to be the confidence in the parents and what they are wanting to do. I'm asking them about next stages about accredited learning, helping their futures and their confidence in saying yes we want to do that, no Kieran we don't want to do that, and I'm fine with that but it's great because there is a certainty there of where they want to go and how they see themselves within the school and that has come from the programme.

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