Improving Parental Engagement
Wester Hailes Education Centre, Edinburgh

• Current roll 300 pupils.
• 42% pupils receive free school meals.
• 32 teaching staff.
• Area of socio-economic deprivation.
• Much work undertaken in recent years to improve attainment and achievement across all years.
• Every student participates in daily mentoring and is expected to engage fully with their own learning.
• Student reports updated monthly for all years.
• 2012/13 across years 30% parents attendance at parents evenings.
Past Process and Barriers

- Parent Council approached and asked to engage the community in consultation to improve parental engagement.
- Previously followed the ‘traditional’ parents evening method - one night, lots of different teachers, lots of waiting around.
- Parents were struggling with time management, childcare issues, shift patterns, their own barriers to learning, poor past school experiences and feelings of shame/embarrassment.
- In particular we felt that often staff were writing reports for themselves – using language we understood and ‘teacher talk’ for common problems. We needed to consider the parent and the student reading the report and how we could, as a service, become more ‘user friendly’.
- Parent engagement was identified as part of our whole school improvement plan.
What are we Trying to Achieve and Why?

• We want to enable more active participation with the parent meeting process and engage more with our Parents/carers

• We hope this will lead to:
  • Improved attendance of parent meetings.
  • Improved communication with parents/carers and students about their learning.
  • Faster responses to issues raised by parents/carers.
  • Improved student responsibility for their own learning.
  • Quality responses based on a whole child approach.
  • A support to improve attainment.
# Consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working group</th>
<th>Set up to look at the concerns and suggest draft process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Team</td>
<td>New process was then discussed with the Senior Team and any improvements suggested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLs/SLs</td>
<td>Draft proposal was then discussed with the Curriculum and Support Leaders and any improvements made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Council</td>
<td>The new proposal was then presented at the Parent Council and received any feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Staff</td>
<td>All teaching staff were involved in a session on looking at the new process and discussed how it was going to be implemented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are we trying to accomplish?

**Improved Parental Engagement**

How will we know that a change is an improvement?

**Increase in Parent’s Attending Meetings**

What change can we make that will result in improvement?

**Parent Need System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Staff agreed change was required  
Admin Support set up  
Allocation of Staff | Time frame set  
Delivery of meetings  
Quality feedback recorded centrally |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Collation of Figures  
Evaluation with Parent/Staff/Students  
Report back to all staff | 1st phase complete  
(Sep-Dec)  
2nd phase started |
New Parent Meeting Process

After consultation the new process was agreed

• Step 1: Students in each mentor group are allocated a meeting with either their Mentor, Support Leader, Support for Learning Leader of DHT.

• Step 2: Admin staff contact Parents/Carers to come in for a meeting during a 2 week opening with a time that suited them and the mentor.

• Step 3: Mentor meets with Parent/Carer and student for a 20 min meeting to discuss the student’s learning using their monitoring and tracking report. The mentor also completes a feedback form with positives, concerns and extra curricular info as a recording of the meeting.

• Step 4: Feedback form is passed to Support Leader so any concerns can be dealt with and keeps a copy centrally. The copy of the form will also be taken to the next meeting as a point of reference if required.

Every student will receive at least two parent/carer meetings through out the school year.
# 1st Phase Parent Meetings
## Sep-Dec 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Total Students Parent Meetings</th>
<th>% Total 2013</th>
<th>% Total 2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>288</strong></td>
<td><strong>211</strong></td>
<td><strong>73%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Overall Parent Meetings 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Total Students with Parent Meetings</th>
<th>% Total 2013/14</th>
<th>% Total 2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent feedback

• 90% of parents surveyed rated the new system as Excellent or Very Good.
• The remaining 10% rated the new system as Good. These 10% were all senior parents.
• ‘Don’t need to wait’
• ‘I like that’s it’s private’
• ‘Easy to understand’
• ‘It gives you an overview and you can concentrate on the problem areas’
• ‘You can go over what was said before’
• ‘Enjoyed meeting just one teacher’
• ‘More flexible with times’
Staff and Student feedback

- Overwhelming support from staff. All rated the new system Good to Excellent.
- Reliant on quality feedback supplied once a month from all teaching staff for all students.
- Improved relationships with staff and students.
- ‘Made for some interesting discussions on the whole child and not just the academic side’
- ‘More responsibility expected of students’.
- ‘Students engage more in meetings’.
- ‘I feel that I am more of an effective mentor having the contact with home’
- Junior students rated the new system highly. Senior students more resistant to the changes and further work will be done in this area.
Addressing concerns – next steps

• Addressing mind set issues surrounding senior school.
• Addressing quality feedback across the school and quality dialogue with all students.
• Continuing efforts to contact hard to reach parents.
• ‘Get to Know the Teachers’ event in discussion for new intake S1.
Insights on Change Happening

• As in any school attitudes to change can be complex and many factors should be taken into consideration when analysing feedback.

• Communication was essential from the start not only to evaluate the previous process and its barriers but also to involve parents/carers on what they would prefer.

• Evaluation was also key to getting the process right and now that we have completed our 1st year it is evident from the results that it has made an impact.

• We still have improvements to make and with further communication with staff, parent/carers and students we hope to be able to tailor it to be even more successful.