



National Parent Conference 2011 'Curriculum for Excellence – One Year On'

Conference Report



The second national conference for parents, organised by the National Parent Forum of Scotland was held in Bishopbriggs Academy in East Dunbartonshire on 1 October 2011. Parents were welcomed by the pupils of Bishopbriggs, who were a credit to their school and their parents. The planning for the Conference was aimed at making all parents feel very welcome and involved in the day and a crèche was available to make sure that parents could relax and take part.

The event was attended by 158 parents and practitioners from across the country and provided parents with an opportunity to hear directly from schools and those on the front line of Curriculum for Excellence. There was the opportunity to ask questions, share ideas and hear what was happening in different parts of the country. Members of Scottish Government, Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), were on hand throughout the day to chat informally to parents and answer any questions they had about Curriculum for Excellence. As well as providing information, they were keen to hear from parents directly and get a greater understanding of how they could do things better.

Ahead of the event the NPFS also hosted the first ever Scottish online parent conference. This attracted a record number of parents to the [Engage for Education](#) website and gave a good picture of the issues that were on parents' minds.

Angela Constance, Minister for Children and Young people at the time of the conference, provided the opening speech followed by a question and answer session. Questions came in via Glow and twitter from parents who were unable to attend on the day.

“I am fully committed to ensuring that parent’s views are listened to and taken into consideration at every level.”

(Minister for Children and Young People)

The Minister described her ambitions and aspirations for children and young people in Scotland and their families, and spoke of the importance she places on parents getting the right information about Curriculum for Excellence and more generally. She launched some new resources for parents, including, the [SQA parent information leaflet](#), new [resources for Parent Councils](#) and information on the new [P7 profiles](#). In recognition of the important role that she saw Parent Councils having in schools, she announced her intention to have weekly telephone calls with Chairs across the country, so that she could hear directly about how parents are involved in their schools.

“Partnership with parents is crucial to our success and the healthy partnership we have now forged with the National Parent Forum of Scotland is already contributing to that success.”

(Minister for Children and Young People)

Parents had the opportunity to choose from a wide range of seminars covering different aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. The seminars were presented by parents and schools, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Education Scotland and the General Teaching Council of Scotland. Parents found the Seminars really worthwhile. More details of these, as well as the Minister's speech, can be found on [Parentzone](#).

There were also two breakout discussion groups which focused on improving the use of ICT in schools, and the particular challenges faced by parents of children with Additional Support Needs.

“Extremely informative and inspiring.”

(Parent)

“Very useful and informative to hear about examples of how schools and parent councils can maximise the benefit of parent involvement.”

(Parent)



Throughout the day, parents were able to browse a wide range of information stalls. This was an important part of the day and allowed parents to gather information to take back to their respective schools and Parent Councils and to discuss issues in more detail with the organisations involved. The stall holders welcomed the opportunity to chat to parents and exchange ideas.

“We hope that we have made a lot of new contacts through setting up a stall at this event.”

(Stall holder)

A very entertaining and stimulating closing speech was given by David Cameron (Education Consultant). He talked about how impressed he

was with the NPFS and how they were already making a difference, not just in engaging with those in power in Scottish Education, but in their efforts to maintain a dialogue with parents and Parent Councils. He also shared his thoughts on the importance of achieving a worthwhile education system, which recognised the child and built the learning around them – an education system that allowed children to learn how to create, innovate, manage risk, and become capable as well as qualified, shaping their future.

“You are now the independent voice of parents in Scotland, represented and effective.”

(David Cameron, Education Consultant)

You can see the video of [David's speech on Parentzone](#)

Overall, the second NPFS Conference was a great success – bigger, better and more relevant to parents. Plans are already underway for next year's conference on Saturday 6 October 2012.

NPFS would like to thank the pupils and staff from Bishopbriggs Academy for hosting the Conference once again.

Useful links:

Keynote speeches

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/getinvolved/forumsotland/npc2011.asp>

Profiles

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/cfe/recognisingachievement/recognisingachievement/profiling.asp>

Parent Council resources

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/getinvolved/parentcouncils/resources/index.asp>

SQA

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46161.html>

Engage for Education

<http://www.engageforeducation.org>

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