

## Extended services – Every Child Matters in action

London Borough of Brent, outer London, ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> in England for deprivation (2007)

### Somali parent and pupil projects at Kingsbury High School – May 2009

## Evidencing impact



#### Aims

What we wanted to do

- Improve the engagement and attainment of Somali pupils, one of the disaffected groups of pupils at Kingsbury High School
- Improve the engagement of Somali parents in school life and their children's education
- Gain insight from the evaluation of the project to enable the extension of the projects at Kingsbury and elsewhere in Brent



#### Impact evaluation – implementation

How we did it

- Ita McNamara, the Assistant Headteacher, met Tajinder Nijjar from the Ethnic Minorities and Traveller Achievement Service to look at ways to target the Somali community. The council gave £25K to create a parents' room
- A Somali parents group (SPG) ran for six weeks from January 2008 with a creche and refreshments
- These sessions were led by the African Child organisation, supported throughout by a parent, Mr Sahal
- A six-week parenting class followed, delivered by Parentline Plus and attended by Somali mothers
- Extra English was identified as a need for a group of 17 Somali pupils
- Following the positive results of this project, more Somali parents (15, including some fathers) attended the next SPG meeting, which was held on a Saturday
- This group has made suggestions for further activities, including some to be run and organised by the parents themselves



#### Impact evaluation – review

What we learnt

- Not to be discouraged by small numbers at the start of the parent outreach project
- Key people fluent in Somali and English are essential and the support of a respected Somali parent (Mr Sahal, who has two sons at university and two in school) was invaluable
- To supplement short focused academic classes with a longer, more social intervention for pupils
- To listen to what parents want for their children and community and to provide sustainable provision from the school, local authority, voluntary sector and parents themselves



#### Next steps

What we will do differently now

- Extend the project to year 8, year 9 and youth provision
- Support the Somali parents in delivering cultural classes
- Extend this project to other schools within Brent
- Recruit a female Somali worker who girls can approach more easily

“When I attended one of the parenting classes for just half an hour, the group raised issues about teachers and classes where children could not understand. These parents had never come into school before and as the [parenting classes] went on, these parents were more willing to come to see me before or after school to discuss their issues” Ita McNamara, Assistant Headteacher, Kingsbury High School

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