



## Closing the attainment gap

# USING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Community assets are:

resources, strengths, capacities and knowledge outwith the school that can support and enhance children's school experience and their educational outcomes.

### LOCAL PEOPLE:

use the knowledge, skills, creativity and enthusiasm of the people around you

### LOCAL SERVICES:

be part of a network of local services to support better educational outcomes

### LOCAL ENVIRONMENT:

benefit from the buildings, parks and open spaces on your doorstep

## Local people

### Parents

Parents have knowledge of their own child that will complement teachers' skills and expertise. If parents feel more involved in their child's education, this will help their child achieve more and do better at school. The *Parents as partners in their children's learning toolkit* includes examples of how to encourage parents to get more involved.

### Don't forget dads

Fathers are less likely to have contact with school than mothers, particularly in early years and primary education. They represent a substantial untapped resource. Make specific efforts to welcome and include dads. There are many examples of good practice: having 'dads' days at school; inviting them to undertake voluntary activity such as paired reading and helping with outings; and ensuring that non-resident dads are treated equally in communication and involvement opportunities.

### The wider family

Older siblings, grandparents and other relatives can also contribute positively to a child's educational outcomes.

### Others in the community

In every community there are people who have the time, skills and knowledge to support their local school. They can also be instrumental in reaching out to families who have not voluntarily engaged with the school. Encourage their voluntary involvement through active recruitment and develop clear plans for their deployment and support.

## Local services

In almost every community there exists a range of services that can support better educational outcomes. Get to know what services exist in your local area and understand how these services might contribute to families being better engaged and to achieving better learning outcomes.

### Other schools

Other schools and teachers can be a great source of information as to what has and hasn't worked.

### Other agencies

'Other agencies' includes police; social work; housing; transport; early years provision; voluntary agencies; and health services. If a family has involvement from a social worker, health visitor, or voluntary agency, these workers can provide helpful information to help inform engagement approaches. They may also be able to support parents directly in becoming more actively involved with the learning process. Community Learning and Development staff have specialised knowledge of family learning methods and can give expert advice on what works best.

### Community groups and businesses

Local clubs and groups such as sports clubs and hobby groups can offer learning experiences for children and parents both within and outwith school. Businesses can offer financial support, but can also provide equipment and expertise as well as work experience opportunities.

## Local environment

Use your local space to help learning. Buildings, parks and other open spaces can offer a wealth of learning opportunities. They can also be used as venues for family contact. Some parents may find schools unwelcoming or intimidating so using a neutral venue such as a café for a meeting or community centre for parent events may make it easier for them to engage with school staff. Relationships between schools and parents can be greatly enhanced by contact outwith the school.