

**Westminster Community Primary School**

John Street  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire West  
CH65 2ED



**FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AWARD**

**FINAL REPORT  
JUNE 2012**

## **Introduction**

Westminster Community Primary School in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire West, signed up for the Family Partnership Award in March 2011. During the past fifteen months the school has gathered evidence to present in an electronic portfolio, and planned an appropriate programme for the final on-site assessment day, which took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

Tracy Phillips, HLTA, Learning Mentor and Chairperson of the PTA, led the award strategically across the school. A team approach to gathering the evidence to build the electronic portfolio was adopted and Tracy worked in partnership with Beverly Marsh, Learning Mentor KS1, who also helps to run the breakfast club at school; Claire Rennie, TA who delivers SaLT programmes in KS1, is a Family Partnership Governor, and also helps to run the breakfast club; and Kathleen Spain, TA in KS2, who helps with the Breakfast Club, is Vice Chair of the PTA, is the Health & Safety Governor, and who runs the school council. The Head Teacher, Sue Finch, has also taken an active part in working directly with parents, in addition to keeping herself informed of the progress made by the Family Partnership Team, in auditing and evidence gathering for the Family Partnership Award.

Rita Cheminais, the Director of Educational Consultancy & Management (ECM) Solutions, was the external assessor. This report summarises the highlights of best practice, observed and heard about during the on-site assessment day. It also reflects good practice evidence, viewed during the scrutiny and analysis of the school's electronic family partnership portfolio of evidence.

## **The programme for the on-site final assessment**

The on-site assessment day took place from 8.30am to 2pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The day included the following:

- Brief Observation of the breakfast club and the Learning Mentor meeting and greeting children and parents on arrival to school
- Tour of the school accompanied by two parents on the PTA (Lisa Chapman and Philippa Watton)
- Meeting with members of the PTA
- Discussion with parents and the college tutor to hear about the adult learning courses
- Lunch in the Quiet Place to meet informally with more parents and the Head Boy and Head Girl
- Meeting with external partners (Pam Beech, EWO and Kerry Snowden, Family Support Worker in the Children's Centre for the area.)
- Feedback to the Head Teacher, Tracy Phillips, Beverly Marsh, Claire Rennie, Kathleen Spain and to the external partners present.

## **Portfolio of evidence**

The portfolio of evidence, submitted for the final assessment off-site, was extremely well-organised, superbly cross-referenced to the key sources of evidence for each aspect of family partnership working, and exemplary in bringing a good range of appropriate evidence together in one place. Tracy Phillips and her team must be congratulated on organising this excellent portfolio, which can be built upon, as new and future family events and activities occur.

### **Aspect 1: Ethos, vision and policy**

As soon as you enter the main entrance of the school, there is a warm, friendly welcome for visitors, parents and families. One parent, during discussion with the external assessor commented:

*“Westminster Primary School is a small school but it has a welcoming feeling when you walk in, (this is helped by having a lovely cheerful secretary). There is always someone there to cheer you up no matter what.”*

The seating area for visitors and parents near the main entrance has interesting books on the table, which show aspects of work of the school. There is a fabulous canvas print which shows snapshots of the children on a Beeston Castle Visit. The school is a very pleasant building to be in, and the Quiet Place provides sanctuary and therapy for those pupils who need it.

In discussion with the Family Partnership Team families feel able to ask for help and support from the Head Teacher, the Learning Mentors, and all class teachers in the school. A parent who accompanied the external assessor on the tour of the school had written a testimonial describing the superb support given by the Head Teacher personally, and the Learning Mentors in the school. She commented:

*“Two years ago I took ill with septicaemia and renal failure, and I almost died. Mrs Phillips and Mrs Spain called around to my house to collect the children Miss Finch called my GP and called an ambulance. If it wasn't for the caring staff of the school I wouldn't be here today.”*

During the tour of the school with two parents, the external assessor asked them what was good about Westminster Community Primary School. Lisa said:

*“Inclusion – every child counts and the school takes care of their needs.”*

Philippa commented:

*“Teamwork.”*

Both parents agreed the school had a family atmosphere where you can talk to anyone. Every morning the Head Teacher and the staff meet and greet the children and their parents on arrival to school. The external assessor witnessed this with Tracy Phillips. This is clear evidence of the school's Open Door Policy working in practice, enabling the parents and children to feel welcome.

The school prospectus states:

*“We understand that our strengths come from the links we build with others within and beyond the school community.”*

The three way partnership with parents, children and the school is highly valued. In discussion with a group of parents on the PTA, one parent remarked:

*“Ms Finch has turned the school around. She’s fun, joins in, and the children respect her.”*

The Head Teacher is hands on, and knows every child and family in the school. Nothing is too much trouble, and she, along with her staff, always “go the extra mile” for children and families. Parents consider the Head Teacher and the teachers in the school to be more like a friend than a teacher/Head Teacher.

Discussion with the school council during the on-site assessment day revealed that they enjoy being at the school because they learn lots of things, have good friends, can make choices in class, and are taught by nice teachers, and parents who are helpful. The children really love their parents joining them for lunch. Their only desired improvement in school would be to have a hot tub in the playground. The external assessor was impressed by the school council’s level of care for the child they sponsor in Kenya, Africa to enable her to have food and water.

OFSTED, in the school inspection report (2011) commented:

*“Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many engage in workshops to enable them to support their children’s learning at home. The monthly family lunches provide a good opportunity for them to join their children in school.”*

*“Parents and carers are happy with all that the school provides.”*

In discussion with external partners (the Family Support Worker, and the EWO), the latter professional commented:

*“I never feel an outsider. I feel part of the partnership. We work together to improve the life chances of the children, and look at the whole picture.”*

Similarly, the Family Support Worker also remarked:

*“Parents know that other agencies and the school work in partnership and have the same views.”*

The school’s mission aims open with:

- we are lifelong learners, and goes on to add:
- everyone is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential in a purposeful and stimulating environment.

The school’s Parenting Policy 2011-2012 is written in family-friendly language. Some of its aims include:

- We listen to and support each other which builds up self-confidence and self-esteem
- We talk to one another in a respectful manner and speak to others as we wish to be spoken to
- We provide childcare as often as possible to ensure everyone is included.

The school has a strong community ethos, as evidenced by the statement in the school prospectus, which states: 'We are proud to be a Community School and we seek to maintain and develop close links with the local community and encourage local residents to be involved in the life of the school. This involves a range of activities such as welcoming volunteers to work in our school, delivering 'home grown' food gifts to local community groups, and choir visits to local areas.

The annual parents' surveys over the last three years are clearly giving parents and carers a voice, in relation to identifying aspects for further improvement in school. Overall, the parents feel the school is welcoming, caring and friendly. They receive enough information, although some parents requested earlier notification about school trips. Parents felt their children were happy at school and making progress. Some parents use the school website, and increasing parental access to this is something worth exploring. Parents in the surveys felt they do get enough opportunities to get involved in school. Some parents know who the school's parent governors are. The Head Teacher always responds personally to parents suggestions for improvement promptly in a letter, indicating that the area for improvement will be addressed.

The portfolio of evidence included several photographs of parents enjoying lunch with their child at school. These lunches are very popular and the number of parents attending has increased. Parental support and attendance at school events is increasing, and the school has a good reputation in the local area.

The school offers tailored support to families under stress, in accordance with their needs. For example, Learning Mentors and TAs do morning pick-ups of children, they text parents to remind them about the importance of their child's attendance and punctuality; they take children home after school; they fed a child when a mother was unwell, and they will attend hospital appointments to support parents with their child. The Head Teacher also supports families directly. For example, she took a child shopping for new shoes at a mother's request. She also talks to children on the telephone to encourage them to come into school. Another example, involved the Head Teacher having breakfast with a child at risk of exclusion from school.

The school has bought into 'Edu Voice', a website which enables families to form a friendship or have a link with another family. The school can earn points and this earns cash prizes, for families who engage with the scheme.

The PTA at Westminster Community Primary School has grown from strength to strength. Discussion with members of the PTA during the on-site assessment day indicated that there was a core group of twelve active parents, but that there were always willing parents to help out at school events. There are three men on the PTA, and the external assessor invited another male parent to join the PTA, as he would make a very valuable contribution to future activities and events. He agreed to join and the Head Teacher is delighted by this news.

Minutes from the most recent PTA meetings indicated the association is very proactive in organising events and activities for families. There was evidence of parental garden helpers preparing an area at school for children's use. Parents also requested a Westminster's got Talent event. The group have lots of ideas and children and parents clearly enjoy attending events. The school also looks for activities to put on in the summer holidays for children and families. During discussion with members of the PTA on the final assessment day, the most popular events attended by families are Family Bingo, Easter, Bonfire and Xmas Bingo; Spring Fair and Autumn Fair. Members of the PTA also help to organise events such as the Penny Mile in school, and next time going for higher value coins to build the mile. They also raise money to fund school trips to Chester Zoo, Liverpool Under-Water Street, Beeston Castle and Conway trips.

What is very impressive, and a model of good practice, is that the school council meet with the PTA to put forward their ideas. The school council also support the PTA by manning the stalls at school fairs. This is another good example of teamwork and collaborative partnerships existing among the school community.

The portfolio of evidence included several case studies of how the school had worked with families under stress, to improve their life chances, and that of their child. The Team around the Family (TAF) process works very well, as the school and external agencies work effectively in partnership. One case study helped to turn a family around who were struggling financially and living in poor housing conditions. The school organised morning pick-ups of the child to get them to school on time; they provided food for the family; the mother engaged with 'tea and chat' to seize the good moments; text messaging was used to keep in regular contact and remind the mother to attend school events; lifts were organised to get the mother to meetings; a 'fresh start' approach was used as the school was non-judgemental; financial help was given to ensure the child got involved with clubs at school; and different 'listening ears' were provided at various times.

After reviewing all the evidence presented on-site and off-site, this aspect of family partnership working has been fully met.

### **Aspect 2: Leadership, management and coordination**

Leadership and management of working in partnership with families is a great strength of the school. The leadership and management of the Family Partnership Award has been exemplary. The core team comprising of Tracy Phillips, strategic lead; Beverley Marsh, Learning Mentor; Claire Rennie, TA and Family Partnership Governor, and Kathleen Spain, TA, and Vice Chair of PTA who runs the school council and is the Health and Safety Governor, worked efficiently and effectively to complete the audit, devise the action plan and then address any gaps or areas for further development, to build a complete electronic portfolio of evidence, to meet the six best practice aspects of family partnership working.

The Head Teacher and the family partnership core team considered that the engagement with the award process had given them confidence in knowing that the school is already doing a great deal for its families. It also helped to identify some gaps that would move the school's family partnership practice further forward. The team approach helped to distribute the evidence gathering process, involving the PTA in the process. The Head Teacher gave the team quality time to meet together to review progress and build the portfolio of evidence.

The roles and responsibilities of each member of the family partnership team are very clear. The Family Partnership Governor statement comments: 'In my role as parent governor I am the nominated Lead Governor for family partnership. Elements of my role include: Attending family events; liaising with parents; liaising with parent facilitator and staff; promoting courses, and responsible for overseeing SEN.'

The school's designated member of staff responsible for leading, managing and coordinating parent and family liaison and partnerships is Tracy Phillips. Tracy's FLIGHT Certificate was included in the portfolio of evidence, and it showed that she had earned 9 Credits at Level 3 in Learning Parent Groups.

There was evidence in the portfolio of the Head Teacher providing evidence in her nomination of Jenny Farrall as Learner of the Year. The Head Teacher's evidence stated that Jenny had been a keen and willing member of craft sessions at school. She had contributed to the smooth running of groups, and kept participants informed of changes and new events. She had enabled everyone's views to be shared in order to inform future time tabling. Jenny has promoted fairness and voice for all during school PTA meetings. This is an example of a wonderful testimonial for a very valued partner.

The school has a Complaints Policy. In the introduction to this policy it states: 'We are a very caring school and if you have a problem we encourage you to come and talk to us immediately. An informal chat with the class teacher or the Head Teacher will usually sort out any problems. It is unusual for this approach not to succeed.'

The Breakfast Club run at the school each morning is very popular. A snapshot observation of this morning event was seen by the external assessor. The children could make choices about the activities they wished to do after breakfast in the club. They could use the computers, read books or play. The parents attending the club with their child also had an opportunity to chat with the staff in the club and with fellow parents.

The Head Teacher of Westminster Community Primary School is visible to parents and families every day. She goes out to see families in the community, and is certainly very family-facing and family-friendly. The parents also say this of the staff, who they feel are equals, and understanding of their issues. The Head Teacher joined the children for a sleepover at the school. There was photographic evidence of this in the portfolio. She also goes on residential breaks with the children, for example she is going with the Year 2 residential this term.

Extracts from the Strategic School Development Plan indicated that the Head Teacher meets on a regular basis with the Learning Mentors to discuss children's progress and any issues arising. The Learning Mentors are valued for the key role they play in the TAF and CAF process, as they provide a direct link with families.

The school's external school improvement consultant, in April 2012, talked informally to a number of parents before school, to gain their insight and views about the school. The parents he talked to were all very positive about the quality of service offered by the school to their children. He recorded the parent comments in his written report. These included:

- The school is a good school
- The school has improved a great deal in recent years
- The school is better visually, for example in the displays
- The school has a great reputation locally
- Children enjoy coming to school
- If there is any problem parents are always listened to
- The school is very approachable
- Problems, where they might exist, are always sorted out
- The quality of care for their children is outstanding
- Teachers and staff at the school are totally committed to the children's welfare
- A parent of a year 1 pupil thought the school was "*just fantastic.*"

The external consultant assessing the school for the family partnership award, would concur with the above comments.

Family partnership working was already a area of best practice in the school, and by engaging in the award process, the school has moved their work in this area even further forward, to become outstanding.

The Head Teacher reports to governors on a regular basis, in her termly reports, on the progress the school is making in the area of working in partnership with families. The Family Partnership Team have also reported back through different staff and team meetings they attend in school, on the progress being made in working towards achieving the Family Partnership Award.



Jonathan Robinson, the DFE Team Leader for Family Strategy, visited the school in November 2011, and he was impressed with what he heard about in his meeting with the Head Teacher and Tracy Phillips. The Head Teacher has corresponded with Jonathan on a couple of occasions, and it is hoped that the good practice at Westminster Community Primary School, would be mentioned in any future DFE reports on best practice in working with families.

The Head Teacher asked three staff to give her feedback on how effective she is on working with families. The first questions asked what the head does to make her family facing. The responses included: she operates an open door policy; she ensures 'meet and greet' system happens each day; she does lunch duty in the hall daily, and she goes the extra mile. The second question focused on how the head impacts on others. The responses from the staff included: it makes her easily approachable; she adds to the supportive network within the school; she eases the pressure off the staff; and she can make early intervention possible. The last question asked what the head did that is good for families. The responses included: she offers bespoke support for families, e.g. buying a child shoes, offering cups of tea. The head is non-judgemental and caring; she always strives to help others solve problems; she provides a shoulder to cry on; she has a good listening ear, and she helps to resolve problems between families.

After reviewing all the evidence presented on-site and off-site, this aspect has been fully met.

### **Aspect 3: Communication and information sharing**

Communication and information sharing is another great strength of the school. The school prospectus clarifies the communication methods used to engage with parents and families. For example, via the Home-School Agreement; by attending the Meet the Teacher Evenings at school; and receiving a written report in the summer term. Parents are also able to chat to the Head Teacher or class teacher at the beginning or end of the school day, if they have any concerns. Every Friday morning in school there is a Celebration Assembly, and parents are welcome to join this. Parents and families also have a great opportunity to communicate with the Head Teacher and staff, when they attend the monthly family lunches.

Weekly newsletters are sent home to parents to update them on school events. The school website has the Head Teachers Blog, which parents can access to keep abreast of events at school. The school prospectus emphasises the importance of good attendance of children at school. It states: 'If your child is absent from school we ask you to phone school as soon as possible to let us know the reasons for their absence. Please also send a letter in with your child when they return to school. We ask parents to arrange family holidays during the school holiday. The school attendance target is 95% and parents are kept

informed about their child's attendance each term. The school has a very simple but powerful chart which shows parents how many days of learning are lost if their child is late by 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes or 30 minutes a day. For example, 5 minutes late per day = three days of learning lost.

Family-friendly language is used in all communication with parents and families. The Head Teacher is a prolific letter writer to parents, thanking them for their support and diplomatically asking them to follow a particular school policy. She is respected for her personal communication with families, by the parents. She always acknowledges the contributions parents make to the school and their child's learning and well-being. Text messaging is a very effective means of communicating with parents. This is used to remind parents to attend meetings or bring things into school for their children. The parents respond quickly to the text messages they are sent.

Clear procedures are in place to ensure staff understand and respect confidentiality and follow information sharing protocols when communicating with families. Evidence presented in the portfolio related to parents receiving notification of the protocols on getting permission to use images of children in school publications and on the website, and the school's procedures in meeting the legislation in the Data Protection Act.

The school provides parents and families with good quality information, in a range of accessible formats, about events and activities for families at school, and in the local area of Ellesmere Port. Evidence presented in the portfolio included: school newsletters promoting school events; a MEND flyer informing families about a free programme running at school for children and parents to help them lead a healthy lifestyle. This programme was brought to the school by the Head Teacher, because families couldn't access it in Chester. Other events parents and families were informed about at school included: Family lunches, sports day, parents evening, trips, after school clubs.

Families have the opportunity to contribute evidence to the school's review process via the PTA meetings, as evidenced by minutes of PTA meetings in the portfolio. This informs future decision making in school, for example, to decide on which activities to include in the school's spring fair, and to hold a Westminster's Got Talent event.

Families at Westminster Community Primary School are consulted when the school is making decisions about policy and practice impacting on families. For example, the school website has a Parents Section, with 'What's New?' and an ongoing Head's Blog, which comments on school events. The website page for parents and families opens with the school's vision and aims.

A range of different approaches are used to seek family views, ideas and opinions. For example, the annual parent survey, letters home, PTA consultation, website, text messaging.

Senior leaders and staff listen to and act on the views of family and children. There were examples of letters from the Head Teacher to parents taking into account their viewpoint about packed lunches.

Parents and families are kept fully informed about their child's progress via Parent's Evenings/Meet the Teacher sessions. The parents all receive a written report in the summer term regarding their child's progress, as well as a letter each term informing them about their child's attendance.

Prompt feedback is always given to families following up on any issues or complaints raised. The portfolio included a letter from the Head Teacher to a parent apologising for a transport mix-up at a football session. The prompt communication by the Head Teacher does help to diffuse any potential conflict between home and school.

After reviewing the evidence on-site and off-site, this aspect of family partnership working has been fully met.

#### **Aspect 4: Partnership in practice**

Family partnership in practice is another great strength of the school. There is a varied menu of events and activities at the school, which entice families to attend. During discussion with parents on the PTA, they indicated that they had made friends among other parents, through attending events at school. One parent mentioned that the attendance of parents at the Jubilee family lunch in school was the best yet, as the queue for lunch was very long.

Families are able to make informed choices about which events and activities they participate in at the school. Evidence presented in the portfolio included a letter to the World Wildlife Foundation from the Chairperson of the PTA, requesting to adopt a rhino for the school for a year. There were also examples of the agenda's of a number of PTA meetings showing the range of activities and events available for families to engage in. For example, Pancake extravaganza; Chinese New Year, Garden Helpers, Northern Lights Charity. The school produces a PTA newsletter which informs parents and families of forthcoming events. There is also a notice board in school available for parents to advertise unwanted goods.

Events and activities are accessible to the full diversity of families. The adult learning courses are the college are excellent. These were tailored to what the parents wished to undertake. They included courses in Numeracy, ICT and Craft.

During discussion with the parents about adult learning at school, the external assessor received the following comments:

- Doing the courses has helped to build my confidence
- You make friends on the courses and we go out together
- You get advice from others in the group
- Doing the courses help you get a job
- It's easier to ask for help in a small group at school
- Doing the courses help me to help my child with their homework
- Doing the maths course as a TA in the school, has helped me to know how to help the children in class with their maths
- The school provides a crèche place in the children's centre nursery, so that parents can attend the courses.

The school has a comprehensive Family Learning and Parenting Courses Policy, which emphasises: 'everyone is valued and encouraged to meet their full potential in a purposeful and stimulating environment.'

All the tutors who deliver the adult learning courses at Westminster Community Primary School love working in the school with the parents, because the school is so welcoming and they really value family/adult learning. One of the parents mentioned that the Head Teacher goes out of her way to ensure there is a room suitable for the courses in school. The Head Teacher visits the adult learning classes to see what the parents are doing. The parents in discussion with the course tutor the external assessor met, was exploring a Retail course for the parents. The school's partnership with West Cheshire College is a very positive and productive partnership which is clearly benefitting the parents in the local community. Those parents who engage in adult learning at the school gain certificates in acknowledgement of their achievements.

The school understands the needs of its families and they adapt their activities and events for children and parents accordingly. This is reflected in the school's Charging Policy. Voluntary parental contributions are requested to support school trips, but those families who cannot afford to make a financial contribution are supported by the school, to ensure no child misses out.

Families can communicate with the Head Teacher by email if they choose. There was example in the portfolio of parents telling the Head Teacher by email, about which was the first record they bought. Some parents also use email to tell the Head Teacher about any special family outings or events they have done with their child at the weekends.

Parents do volunteer to help organise, run or participate in events and activities at school. Evidence included an account of a mother who is rebuilding her confidence by beginning to engage in a school trip with her son, and is starting to develop a circle of friends for herself.

A Flyer on the Penny Mile Fundraising Assembly, where children and parents bring in coins to see if they can make a mile when the coins are placed in a line on the floor in the hall, was produced as evidence in the portfolio, along with a Red Nose Notice informing families of a raffle ticket sale to win a hamper, and notification to parents of the cost if their child or they wish to pour tinned tomatoes over the Head Teacher, to support Red Nose Day.

During discussion with parents who were members of the PTA and engaging in adult learning, the external assessor heard how much they value the clubs put on for their children after school. For example, the successful Film Club, was considered to be very beneficial to the children, and particularly to those working parents. The parents knew their child was safe, was fed, and was enjoying watching a film with their friends at school. Up to seventy three children are members of the film club, and on average about thirty six children attend this club. Kathleen Spain produced an excellent report about this club.

The school does ensure that significant family activities taking place at the school are featured in the local press; for example, family lunches. This media coverage is also contributing to raising the profile of the school in the local community.

Health and safety procedures and protocols are always followed, and robust risk assessments are undertaken by staff before any family events and activities take place in school with families. The portfolio of evidence included an example of the risk assessment undertaken prior to the Sleepover taking place at school.

The school is fortunate enough to have invested in establishing a Quiet Place. This resource has been very beneficial in improving the well-being of those children experiencing emotional or other difficulties. The Quiet Place is located off a classroom. The environment is very emotionally intelligent, and is evidence of how children's barriers to learning are addressed, to enable them to learn to their optimum potential. Parents can meet in the classroom by the Quiet Place, and they are able to spend time with their child here, when appropriate.

Staff and parents, willingly support the events and activities the school puts on for families and parents. Nothing is ever too much trouble when it comes to meeting the needs of the whole child, which includes their parents/family.

After reviewing all the evidence presented on-site and off-site, this aspect of family partnership working has been fully met.

#### **Aspect 5: Early intervention**

The school, in partnership with external agencies intervene early with children and families who are vulnerable or under stress. The collaborative partnership working between the school and agencies is impressive. The portfolio of evidence included a number of case studies of where support and intervention

with families and their child had turned them around, as well as an excellent chronology on family events, provided by the Family Support Worker.

Speaking to external partners, all spoke highly about their work with the school, indicating of many of the schools in the local area, this schools follows advice and is consistent in its work with families. The school never gives up on a family or child and their commitment, care and persistence is to be commended.

Children at the school are equipped with the skills to prepare them for family life and family responsibilities, through the school's SEAL programme and the Quiet Place, which helps the children to develop emotional intelligence and resilience. A good range of evidence was presented in the portfolio, which included an example of SEAL homework on feelings. This homework focused on the feelings of different members of the family, and what parents value about their child.

Children know the negative impact of family relationships in relation to the impact of an excesses of drugs, alcohol, smoking and domestic violence. For a minority of children this is part of their family life. Evidence provided in the portfolio, included a copy of the Childline Schools Service Agreement, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Service and of the school. It also covered Safeguarding, Confidentiality and information sharing and the complaints procedure. A letter to parents and carers informed them about the Assembly and workshop being delivered in school by this organisation (NSPCC), and requested parental permission for their child to participate in the programme.

Children do know about the different types of families through their work in school on the PSHE curriculum. Evidence presented in the portfolio, included a page on the eight different definitions of what a family is. The definition that was most popular was: A family is a group of people who love one another.

Children have access to positive family role models and learn about family relationships, from staff and parents in school. Parents are welcome to join their child at the Breakfast Club and the Homework Club. Some children from the school had participated in a PE staff meeting. The Head Teacher wrote letters to the parents of those children, thanking them for their valued support.

A comprehensive induction programme is offered to new families and children joining the school, at any time in the year. Home visits also take place to enable staff to meet with the family and child in their own home environment, putting them at ease, and enabling staff to see the child interacting at home.

The school uses appropriate strategies to reach the 'harder to reach' parents.

Contact with parents and families includes: a weekly newsletter, text messaging, phone calls, home visits, and face-to-face contact on the school playground. The school had identified what the barriers to engagement with some families were, and then made a list of what worked well, which were all the approaches the school is already using.

The school has effective transition and transfer procedures in place to support children moving into the school, and moving out of the school. The school invites children and parents into school for taster sessions and to reassure parents and the child about the support for them in joining the school. Parents meet the teacher and are given a tour of the school. They are given information about the school routines, uniform, behaviour policy, and the curriculum. Home visits are valued by parents, as they can ask any questions in confidence.

The school is part of a SEAL network, and they along with other local primary schools join in group meetings with the feeder high school. The secondary school hosts meetings for children and parents. Westminster also holds a Celebration Day for the Year 6 children in recognition of the children's progress and enthusiasm.

After reviewing all the evidence presented on-site and off-site, this aspect of family partnership working has been fully met.

#### **Aspect 6: Effectiveness**

OFSTED in the school inspection report (February 2011) commented:

*"The school works effectively with many parents."*

*"Parents and carers are happy with all that the school provides."*

Family feedback informs future developments in the school, particularly in relation to working with families. Evidence presented in the portfolio included a Parent Governor presenting awards to children in school. Email evidence indicated an auntie with skills as a school cook, offering to run a cookery club in school for the children.

Good practice in working with families is shared with others locally, although the school is modest about its achievements in this area. For example, the Head Teacher was invited to deliver an input about its work with CAF, TAF and parents, at a Multi-Agency Induction Day in West Cheshire.

Partnership working with families and other external partners is having a positive impact on children's well-being and learning. Evidence presented in the portfolio included evidence of tracking children's attendance to identify which families would benefit from further support. There was also good evidence of a group of pupils being tracked for attendance, and the trend of their attendance over five years was shown. A RAG rating system is used to highlight critical group of children who need monitoring.

The school has a robust evidence to demonstrate the positive impact of the work staff do with families. Evidence presented included CAF and TAF reviews, which all acknowledged the impact of the support and interventions from the school and its external agencies. For example, one TAF report, the parents commented:

*“I feel the support that has been offered is real good and I am feeling more positive about the whole thing. I would be lost without it.” [sic]*

The portfolio included a very moving piece of evidence of how through their effective partnership working with a mother of a child with special educational needs, who found it difficult to work with key professionals, including the Head Teacher, the school has worked wonders. By working with external partners this mother has been helped to accept praise, cope with her thoughts and feelings, and with the demands of being a mother with a child with a disability. The mother wrote a very moving poem which illustrated her feelings about being a mother.

After reviewing the evidence presented on-site and off-site in the portfolio, this aspect of family partnership working has been fully met.

### **Overall Outcome from Assessment**

The external assessor Rita Cheminais, wishes to thank the Head Teacher, governors, staff, pupils, parents and external partners for all their hard work over the last fifteen months, in contributing to the self-evaluation and evidence gathering processes. The on-site assessment day was a truly enjoyable occasion, where outstanding and very good evidence was observed and heard about first hand.

Congratulations to the whole school community for achieving the national Family Partnership Award. The award is valid for three years, and if the Head Teacher wishes to renew the award for a further three years, she will need to apply to Educational Consultancy & Management (ECM) Solutions for a reassessment.

**Director of Educational Consultancy & Management (ECM) Solutions  
signature:**



**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Director, Educational Consultancy & Management  
(ECM) Solutions

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