



Accreditation, Charter Gold

Accreditation Report:

Wath Victoria Primary School
6th March 2020

Genuine Partnerships Accreditation Team:

Jill Adams - Rotherham Learning Support Service (Accreditation Team Lead)
Jemma Wilkinson - Rotherham Parent Carers Forum (Implementation Team)
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Accreditation Process

The accreditation process is based on the portfolio of evidence and discussions between the Implementation Team, Charter Champions and Accreditation Team about examples of 'Best Charter Practice'.

The accreditation visit is an opportunity to observe and discuss the evidence presented with staff, parents/carers and children.

The term 'parents' should be read as to include both parents and carers

Evidence Considered:

- Feedback from the Implementation Team
- Portfolio of evidence
- Accreditation visit incorporating:
 - Discussion with some parents/carers as they dropped children off at school in the morning
 - Focus group with six parents
 - Focus group with 15 children from Key Stage One and Two
 - Tour round school led by four children
 - Observation and discussion about identified areas of Best Charter Practice
 - Consultation with Charter Champions: D McKinnon, A Howlett and K Canetti

The Charter Team had a wonderful day at Wath Victoria School. The school motto is 'Aspire, Believe, Achieve'. This was in much evidence. School staff work exceptionally hard to provide all the children with the tools to achieve, ensuring as much as possible that the children and their families have the solid foundations to thrive. Much emphasis is placed on giving the children the skills to understand and believe in themselves, underpinned by opportunities to work with a range of professionals to promote a breadth of career experiences they can aspire to. The school is deeply committed to the welfare of the children and their families. Staff give much time, thought and effort to ensuring the children can be as happy as possible, and this extends to the whole family. Overwhelmingly, parents told us they feel welcome in the school and recognise that staff are supportive of their children and the family as whole. Parents frequently shared with the team: 'They are like friends.' Charter Champions told us: 'We stick up for parents, we fight for them and they know we really care.' The school supports families in as many aspects of their lives as practicably possible. Work around mental health and wellbeing is truly inspirational.



The children we spoke to have a deep and mature understanding of their own emotional wellbeing but equally expressed the trust they have in adults in school to help and support them. They told us: 'It doesn't matter what your family is like, it's the same love.' This depth of care, respect and commitment is brilliantly reflected in all aspects of school life at Wath Victoria.

Welcome and Care

The following were highlighted as Best Charter Practice:

Staff at Wath Victoria have worked hard to develop supportive relationships with the whole family. Charter Champions identified that this meant building on the positive interactions initiated by school staff and they feel proud that: 'All the staff are really friendly and welcoming.' The school recognised the need to provide a comfortable and safe space for staff and parents to talk to each other and it has made available a well decorated, accessible parents' room. Parents told us they liked the room, 'It's always ready, comfortable and relaxing.' Parents recognised the emphasis staff place on the welcome for parents. Effort is made to provide time for people. Staff recognise how important this is: 'Just talking for half an hour helps'; 'They are always available to talk to you.' Parental concerns are speedily addressed: 'They are really helpful; they were on it straight away.' School staff recognise the burden that any worry or concern can have on families and they ensure that they take the time to follow up any issue. Parents told us: 'You'll know they'll find and answer straight away.' The children recognise how their school supports them as individuals: 'When something happens, she wants to know and dig deeper and resolve it'.

School staff care deeply about their children and their families. Two practitioners work full-time in a purely supportive role for children and families. They shared: 'We feel it's important that parents feel supported.' This is evident in the work that is undertaken with individual families across the school. The many examples of individual case work exemplify how concerns are identified. When trauma is experienced by children, the whole family is immediately involved. Skilled, proactive and knowledgeable practitioners are able to organise a raft of support mechanisms for families covering a whole range of issues. Work with parents is thorough and well documented and runs alongside bespoke intervention for the children. Staff take care to support families over time. One parent told us: 'They worked for ages on X's bereavement, they were on it.' One of the children shared that adults at school promoted sibling support and he, '...found out about how to help his little brother.' Another child proudly told us that he has autism and goes to Socially Speaking: 'It's a lot of fun.'

Underpinning this work is the relationship that practitioners have with parents. Parents told us: 'They don't judge people'; 'They have relationships with the whole family'; 'It's how personable and caring they are'; 'It's all about the kids and the parents.' Furthermore, parents told us the impact the support had on them as individuals, and appreciate the time taken by school staff to reassure them: 'She cares and wants to know I'm at ease with the situation'; 'Mrs. McKinnon said, 'You can do it' and it made a huge difference to my mindset'; 'The school have supported me right through it.'

Staff organise a whole range of thematic events to which parents are invited such as 'Read and Rave', 'Number Rocks' and V.E day celebrations. Parents reported that there were





many events in which parents can become involved and they often organise an early start so that working parents are able to attend: 'Parents are always involved, that's what I really like'.

Wath Victoria Primary School also has in place the following examples of good practice for *Welcome and Care*:

- ✓ External services that parents may need are signposted across social media as well as in school
- ✓ Charity fundraising events are held across school
- ✓ Community based projects are integral to the curriculum
- ✓ Positive messages are shared across social media to promote positivity and celebrate individual efforts
- ✓ External agencies are utilised such as Rotherham United to extend the curriculum
- ✓ Opportunities such as this 'Picture This' are used to showcase the children's work in a wider environment, to which parents were invited
- ✓ There is an emphasis on displaying children's work across the school to a very high standard.

Communication

The following were highlighted as Best Charter Practice:

School staff have recognised the need for effective, open and honest communication to enable the wellbeing of all and how this underpins the development of positive relationships. They try to create an ethos that says: 'If you aren't happy with something, come and tell us.' Parental questionnaires are used to evaluate the effectiveness of school practice around communication and overwhelmingly parents are positive around the efforts school have made. Parents expressed confidence that staff would listen to them and that they would make the time to see them. Parents shared: 'We're not rushed, there's time to talk'; 'They get to know you on a personal level.' They also expressed satisfaction in the expansive range of communication methods: 'There is a lot more notice for parents.' Practitioners also make sure parents are responded to in a timely manner: 'She phoned me straight away and I think it's brilliant.' Staff recognise that communication needs to be honest: 'Even if I haven't managed to get something done, I'll phone the parent and say I have tried.' They are flexible in their endeavours to provide opportunities for parents to talk: 'They will make a different appointment if you can't get in'. Practitioners make time to attend meetings, even in the school holidays.

The school uses the Dojo system to ensure that every child's success can be celebrated and to demonstrate to parents how their child is settling at school. Parents appreciate the system: 'It's nice when they use Dojo, it puts your mind at rest'; 'If you can't get in, they put photos on DoJo.' Parents can also upload home experiences which teachers can see and share with the class: 'My son thinks it's brilliant that teachers can see what they do at home.' Staff spend time throughout the school day adding to Dojos so that parents can see what their children are doing. The system combines celebrating individual successes with reassuring parents: 'We are always celebrating.'





Wath Victoria Primary School also has in place the following examples of good practice for *Communicate*:

- ✓ Workshops for parents and carers on a range of issues such as bullying and reading
- ✓ Every social platform is used to disseminate information, over and above the more conventional means, including: Dojo; texting; the school's website; Facebook; Twitter and email
- ✓ School dates are set early in the year
- ✓ Staff are on the playground meet and greet parents
- ✓ 'New to Year' meetings are organised
- ✓ There are frequent questionnaires to facilitate feedback from parents and there is evidence this is acted upon

Value and Include

The following were highlighted as Best Charter Practice:

School staff do their best to ensure families feel that they and their children feel valued and included. Parents shared: 'They treat every child as an individual'; 'I haven't met anyone here who doesn't know my child as an individual'; '[My son] lacks confidence, and they've brought him right on'; 'They make every child feel as welcome as they can and build their self-esteem'; 'I worked really closely with school and they went out of their way to help me.' One parent told us that her child had additional needs and she didn't feel pressurised about his need to have time off school. IEPs (Individual Education Plans) are updated in a timely manner: 'Brilliant updates on IEPs.' The children are very aware of the nature of the work practitioners do with them: 'Teachers have helped me be calm down and be a better person'; 'When you are mad or upset, they take you out and talk about other things.' The children know that staff care for them: 'Teachers really care about us, if there is a problem, they sort it out'; '[They teach me] how to act in certain situations.' Staff also recognise that for many young people change can be traumatic and they have an extensive programme of enhanced transition arrangements across year groups within the school and to prepare for new settings. Children told us: 'When you are new, they made me relax.'

Wellbeing is highly valued in school and it has achieved the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools award as well as the Gold Anti-Bullying and Healthy Schools awards. It is recognised that: '...it has a massive impact on our children.' This ethos underpins every aspect of school life. Much emphasis is placed on developing the children's metacognitive skills, for example by employing regular mindfulness sessions to help them achieve an awareness of wellbeing and personal growth. As the children told us: 'If you are shy, they help you become more confident'; 'They teach you how to be a bystander or an upstander'; 'You learn from your mistakes.' Specialists are invited into school to share their expertise with staff and parents alike, for example during 'Anti-bullying week' and 'Children's Mental Health week'.

A Hall of Fame assembly has been created to really value and celebrate success. It is a special event valued by children and parents alike. It is very well attended and if parents are unable to attend, they can view the event by Dojo. Parents spoke highly of the event: 'It makes them feel right special'; 'It makes you smile for the day'; 'Kids absolutely love it'. The children described walking through the hall, which is full of parents. They said it made them feel scared but they were pleased that they had participated: 'It's quite nerve wracking'; 'It





made me feel very proud'; 'It made me feel proud that you've worked hard'; 'I got mine for being well mannered'; 'It makes us feel very joyful.' The children like their parents being there, 'Our family cheers us on and congratulates us.' The children's out of school activities are also celebrated.

Wath Victoria Primary School also has in place the following examples of good practice for *Value and Include*:

- ✓ All practitioners are trained in trauma-informed practice
- ✓ Staff model value and include in everything they do and make use of every opportunity to do so
- ✓ There is a focus on making school welcoming to encourage parents and carers to come in to speak to staff
- ✓ Colourful, child-friendly posters around the school highlight awareness and good practice around mental health
- ✓ Staff are situated in the playground every morning and afternoon
- ✓ The school is purposefully flexible in order to accommodate the needs of individual children and their families
- ✓ There are competitions that encourage whole family participation such as 'Autumn Selfies'
- ✓ Aspirational messages are very evident across the school about self -value, achieving potential and a wide variety of career options
- ✓ The school environment is well kept and presented to a very high standard

Partnership:

The following were highlighted as Best Charter Practice:

The school has established Friends of Wath Victoria to provide a further opportunity for parents to be involved in school. Parents arrange and take part in a range of events such as school discos and fairs. They told us: 'We come up with the ideas.' Friends of Wath Victoria helps organise and promote a variety of events and encourages other parents to become involved too: 'We organise lots of events, we've sold ice creams, Christmas fayres, bingo, summer fairs, discos...' The events are popular within the community and are very well attended: 'I had a stall but didn't get to the others... too busy.' Parents are appreciative of the help school staff provide: 'They supply all of what we want without judgement.' Parents enjoy being involved: 'It's brilliant, everyone gets along.'

There is a school council involving children across the Key Stages One and Two. The councillors are chosen by their peers and it was fantastic to see a representative group of children reflecting the school population of Wath Victoria. What was evident from the school council was how happy everyone was in being themselves and how accepting they were of each other. The children told us about the black book in which they make note of ideas or concerns their classmates have conveyed. They told us about the tree planting day at which everyone planted a tree with a family member: 'We wanted school to be nicer and trees give off fresh air.' They told us about the clubs that are available in school and the new playground equipment that has been expanded in response to school council requests. They said how school staff can also be nominated for an award to be presented during the 'Hall of Fame'. We were told that the school council provides opportunities to make new friends but also that their school is a place where, 'Everyone cares for one another' and respect is an





important part of being healthy. The children also talked about the work they do on feelings and bullying. The school council has been afforded opportunities to meet with the district council to suggest improvements for a local park; these were then completed and the children were invited back to see the improvements.

Wath Victoria Primary School also has in place the following examples of good practice for *Partnership*:

- ✓ Social and fund-raising events are organised for parents and children such as Summer and Christmas fayres, Tea Dances and training events
- ✓ Coffee mornings are organised on a regular basis and include parents
- ✓ Parents are included in many school events such as during Mental Health Awareness week
- ✓ There is extensive use of outside specialists such as representatives from the Advanced Manufacturing Park and Marks and Spencer
- ✓ Successes achieved outside the school, such as writing to the MP, are shared and celebrated
- ✓ Awareness and training for parents around wider issues such as Safer Internet day has been developed
- ✓ There is much support and activity in relation to national charity initiatives

Congratulations Wath Victoria Primary School on achieving Charter Gold. Well done for a very well-deserved achievement! This award reflects the commitment to a community ethos shared by all partners: leadership team, governors, parents/carers and children. Wath Victoria strives to create a culture of care, respect, belief, honesty and equal partnership. We look forward to hearing how you go from strength to strength in this together.

Next Steps

The following next steps were discussed:

- ✓ Setting up the integrated unit for young people with Autism
- ✓ Maintaining current practice in the economic climate
- ✓ Further embedding the Charter ethos and the practice of working in partnership with children and their families

**Jill Adams,
Accreditation Team Lead,
April 2020**

