



## Leading Parent Partnership Award

### Re-Assessment Report

School	Wolgarston High School
Address	Cannock Road Penkridge Stafford ST19 5RX
Telephone:	01785 788400
Headteacher	Mr Philip Tapp
Person responsible for parent partnership	Mrs Nikki Hastings-Smith
Date of Re- Assessment Visit	6 April 2011
LPPA Verifier	Ms Shirley Elomari

#### Commentary on the Mini-portfolio of Evidence

The Mini-portfolio is well organised and contains a full range of evidence to show that the school is meeting the long term success criteria of the LPPA, that parent partnership is fully embedded in the life and work of the school and that parents' views are taken into account when planning for development.

There is particularly strong evidence to show:

- The development of the LPPA Group into an active Parent Forum that provides parents with a meaningful voice in the life and development of the school
- The inclusion of parents on working groups alongside governors and staff
- The significant improvements in communication, with the introduction of a new telephone system, text messaging and use of email as well as increased contact between form tutors, subject teachers and parents
- The very strong pastoral pathways, which enable form tutors, assistant head teachers, the Family and Student Service and other staff to develop highly effective relationships with parents.

## Commentary on the tour of the school

The entrances to the site and the building are clearly signposted. Car parking spaces for visitors are clearly marked and close to the entrance.

The school entrance area has been developed into an attractive and welcoming space where a wide range of information is available for parents to access. Leaflets and publicity material for external agencies, such as the Parent Partnership Service, are provided as well as information about the school, including school policies and celebrations of the school's successes.

The recently developed Learning Centre provides a good quality space for staff to meet with parents as well as an attractive area with excellent facilities for students. The placing of the Family and Student Service in this area indicates that pastoral support for parents is a central part of the school's work.

Display is of a very high quality throughout the school: students' work is showcased to parents and other visitors in a positive attractive way. The display of 'student of the month' certificates in subject corridors celebrates achievement and helps to raise students' aspirations.

The lecture theatre is a very positive development. The raked seating and audio-visual aids provide a suitable venue for presentations and meetings for groups of parents.

Effective use is made of all available space, for example by creating small study areas in corridors where students can work quietly. The Sixth Form accommodation is placed in the centre of the school and provides very good facilities. The cafeteria is very attractive and informal.

## Commentary on discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils/students

**Staff** are unanimous in the view that the quality of dialogue between staff and parents has improved significantly over recent years. This is attributed to the openness of the school and the willingness to share information and work closely with parents, which in turn means that parents are more willing to engage with the school and contribute to its life.

The vertical form tutor system also makes a positive contribution to effective partnership: parents meet the form tutor before their children join the school and there is ongoing, regular contact between the tutor and parents.

Parents are also able to contact subject teachers. The school makes very effective use of email in communicating with parents.

This contact has resulted in parents having a better knowledge and understanding of school procedures and systems: as a result, attendance and behaviour have improved.

There is a good range of meetings for parents: some are subject specific, others provide information about induction, options in Year 9 and Year 11, e-safety and revision.

Pastoral support is strong. The contribution of the Family and Student Service is very positive, not only in providing direct support but also in signposting families to appropriate external agencies and in having staff who are not teachers and may therefore be seen as more approachable by some parents and students.

**Governors** are confident that consultation with parents is now an established and embedded part of school life. Parents have many opportunities to give their views and make suggestions. The Parent Forum is a major strength and a real influence on the life and development of the school and parents are well represented on the governing body.

The effective partnership with parents has led to positive outcomes such as the significant reduction in exclusions and increase in attendance.

The work of the Wolgarston Partnership has developed a better common understanding among parents at the ten schools about the importance of regular attendance throughout a child's school career.

The text messaging service is working extremely well and is appreciated by parents.

The assistant head teachers, form tutors and Family and Student Service together provide very successful home school liaison and pastoral care: students are well known to a number of staff and can access support in a number of ways.

The school is not resting on its laurels but continues to focus on ways of improving parent partnership: the communication working group is evidence of this commitment in that, although communication between home and school is very good, the school is seeking to further improve it. For example, although good advance notice is provided of the date of events in the regular School News Update, the time is not always so well publicised.

**Parents** state that the school is noticeably more welcoming and open.

The new entrance area and the Learning Centre make an excellent first impression and it is now a pleasure to come into school.

The information provided for parents has improved and the school has embraced new technology: it is good to have the text message service and to be able to email staff directly.

Parents are confident of a rapid response when they telephone or email.

Parents are very pleased by the way that the LPPA Group has developed into the Parent Forum and delighted that the forum is attracting new members. The forum ensures that parents are able to offer suggestions and be involved in driving school development. The school listens to the views of parents and is very willing to work with them to make changes. The Parent Forum is pleased that the school has remained committed to improving and refining its work with and for parents since gaining the LPPA in 2008.

Induction to the school is smooth, with both parents and children feeling well informed and confident about the move. The Year 9 Tutorial meetings are valuable and help parents develop a strong working relationship with the form tutor.

Pastoral staff know students very well and pick up on changes very quickly, keeping an eye on a student or making informal contact with parents as appropriate.

Pastoral systems work extremely well.

The Family and Student Service is very useful for both parents and children. Parents are aware of the wide range of information and support that pastoral staff are able to provide.

A lot of work has recently been done on the website, which parents and their children find useful. Parents say that the information on English, maths and science is particularly helpful to their children. Parents are aware that there have been problems with access to the learning platform and recognise that more work remains to be done on the website, for example including details of homework.

**Students** are proud of their school and believe that parents are very well informed about school life and their children's progress.

Year 9 students speak very positively about their induction: there were 'loads of opportunities' to visit their new school and lots of information.

Students and their parents valued meeting their form tutor before the summer holidays as this gave them confidence. They also like the vertical tutor system as older students in their form look out for them.

The Year 9 tutorial system is very good because targets are set and parents have lots of time to talk to the form tutor.

Reports are very brief but parents can then talk to the form tutor or subject teachers if they have any questions or want more detailed information.

Students understand the behaviour system and know at which stage parents are contacted. They appreciate the postcards and certificates that are sent home when they do well.

Students like the website but would like homework to be available there. They feel that SNL2 was too complicated and often they could not access what they needed but as yet the website does not have all the information that was on the learning platform.

There is a good awareness of the range of information meetings, consultations and courses that are available for parents. One student appreciated the cookery club run for parents and children by the food technology department.

### **Strengths Identified In The Review**

- The commitment of the head teacher, senior leadership team, staff, governors and parents to the continued, strategic development of the partnership between school and parents, including the thoughtful response to the areas for development identified in the 2008 LPPA Final Verification report.
- The way that working in partnership with parents has become an integral, well embedded and sustainable part of the school's life.
- The transparency of the school's work: parents are very well informed and included in a range of ways.
- The very active Parent Forum, which is supported by an increasing number of parents and gives parents a voice in the development and review of policies and procedures as well as maintaining an open dialogue between parents and the senior leadership team.
- The inclusion of parents on working groups to look at aspects such as assessment and reporting, communication, marketing and the learning platform: this ensures that parents' views are part of the development planning process.
- The changes in management and pastoral systems, which have strengthened contact between staff and parents. Each assistant head teacher has a direct responsibility for a caseload of students; form tutors and the Family and Student Service provide focused support for students and/or their parents and subject teachers also contact parents directly.
- The improvements in communication between school and home including the new telephone system, the text messaging service, the website and the use of email. School documentation is of a consistently high quality and is attractive. The 'Wolgarston Anno

Scorso' is a recent development that provides a very attractive record of the school year that is shared with the wider community as well as parents and students.

- The increase in attendance since 2008, especially in Year 11, and the very significant reduction in exclusions, which are indicative of the success of working closely with parents in order to improve the outcomes for students.
- The effectiveness of the Wolgarston Partnership, particularly in engaging parents with the High School well in advance of their children's admission and in the shared procedures for promoting good attendance. The adoption of the South Staffordshire Home School Agreement by all the schools in the area sets the expectations for parental support.

### **Areas For Development**

- As planned, continue to develop the website so that it includes curriculum information, homework and ideas (such as places to go, useful websites, DVDs to watch) to encourage parents to help their children's learning at home
- Build on the excellent opportunities for enrichment provided for students by developing opportunities for parents to become actively involved in some of the activities. This could be by opening up the last part of workshops so that parents can try their hand at the activities their children have been exploring or by offering joint extra curricular activities.

### **Recommendation by the Adviser**

That the school holds the Leading Parent Partnership Award for a further period of three years.

### **Headteacher Comment**

**May we use your comments on your website and/or publicity material? Yes/No**