

Implementing the SEND Reforms: Parental Engagement Granby Primary School, Leicester

Background

Granby Primary School, Leicester started with Achievement for All in May 2013. A key priority was to develop a more effective relationship with parents, in particular to engage the so-called 'hard to reach' parents in their child's education.

Context

Granby serves a community in the centre of Leicester. It is a larger than average-sized primary with the majority of pupils from White British heritage.

The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average with a below-average proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement. The proportion eligible for free school meals or in the local authority care is below average.

Approach

The school is actively engaged with the local community and well respected. However a small group of parents are not only hard to reach but on occasions openly hostile to the school and unsympathetic to its values, aims and objectives. The school joined Achievement for All as it provided a new way of addressing an old issue and to do so in the context of a whole school approach involving all staff and the governing body.

The target Achievement for All children were selected with an eye to the parents/carers that they were also anxious to involve. Granby approached the parents/carers and explained in more detail why their children was part of the programme and how, in partnership with the family, they hoped to raise the child's aspirations, access to the curriculum and ultimately their achievement.

Parents/carers were invited to Structured Conversations and with a great deal of flexibility by staff in rearranging dates, times and venues, the majority attended. They were quickly reassured that the aim was not only to support the child in his/her learning both academically and socially, but also to provide support to the parent and inspire them to consider their own learning and social needs and aspirations.

As relationships with the parents improved, the role and responsibility for parental engagement was incorporated into the job description of the teacher who was also responsible for reading recovery in the school. This member of staff had an excellent relationship with parents and quickly gained their confidence – within just a few terms the school was able to offer an after school club for Achievement for All parents to meet together, to cook or bake and have tea with their children.

The cookery club proved to be a success and at the end of the Autumn term the parents cooked a Christmas dinner together and served the meal to the Achievement for All children and staff. Building on this positive start, the school provided two accredited courses for the parents, the first

on Food Hygiene (Level 2) and the second a work place First Aid course.

The school also worked with parents on raising literacy levels and awareness of the expectations around literacy for their child. The teacher provided weekly support, and all but one of the parents went on to become volunteer parent readers in school. More recently parents have helped prepare reading sacks, which went home with target children over the school holidays.

At the end of Summer term 2014 the parents put together activity packs for all Achievement for All and Pupil Premium children designed to provide information and activities to meaningfully engage children over the long holiday. This included leaflets and suggestions on where parents could take children locally, based on research done by the parents in local libraries and the city council tourist information office.

At the end of the 2013/14 year a presentation assembly was held and the certificates in Food Hygiene and First Aid were presented to parents - a special moment for all, with parents who had been very challenging in the past now showing emotion and pride at their achievements.

Impact

- Some parents who were the most difficult to engage with are now key advocates and are working as role models with the next generation of target parents and children.
- The school is now able to talk with parents about their child's education. Previously some parents saw any approach by the school as criticism which often lead to conflict.

- The target children are more motivated and proud of their efforts and achievements and those of their parents. Their progress as a cohort has been amongst the best in the school with the majority of the Achievement for All pupils achieving between 3-4 APS gain in the last term alone.

Key Learning

Some Pupil Premium funding was used to pay for Achievement for All, and to support the work with parents including resources for the cookery club, to fund the reading sacks and to hire a double decker bus to take Pupil Premium children and their parents to Skegness in the summer holidays.

Granby Primary started with small steps to build mutual confidence and identified a key member of staff to drive the parental engagement programme, and to understand the challenges that parents faced.

Next Steps

To keep recruiting new children and parents each year and to follow and replicate current successes.

Contact Us

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Or call: 01635 279 499