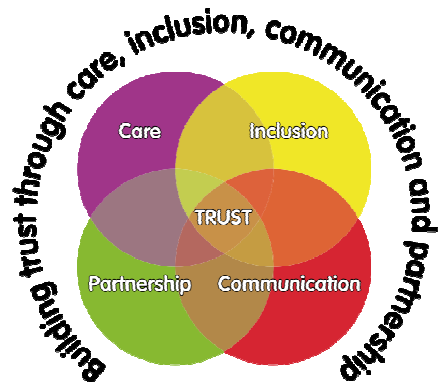




Rotherham Charter for Parent and Child Voice

Sitwell Infant School Final Charter Accreditation Report: Visit 2nd July 2013

Accreditation team: Claire Whiting (Rotherham Educational Psychology Service)
Janet Halse (Rotherham Parent Partnership Service)
Jo Pilgrim (Rotherham Parent Carer Forum)

Accreditation Process

The **Charter Self-Monitoring Document** is the basis for evaluating whether a school or setting achieves Charter Status or Charter Gold. Schools and services that achieve Charter Status will provide good evidence for many of those indicators that are relevant and appropriate to them.

To achieve Charter Gold most, if not all, the relevant and appropriate examples of indicators for the school/setting will be evidenced. **Quality (depth)** as well as **consistency (breadth)** of activity will help determine the award. There will be **systemic mechanisms** embedded that **sustain** all four principles.

Charter Status:

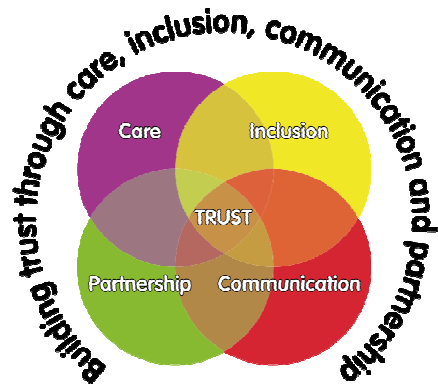
Evidence of good quality activity for every principle and statement and several examples of good practice for each, examples of child and parent involvement in school systems and positive impact as a result

Charter Gold

Rich variety of good quality evidence for every principle and statement and an abundance of examples of good practice for each, examples of child and parent involvement embedded consistently through the process within school systems, evidence of sustainability and positive impact as a result

Evidence considered:

- Feedback from the Implementation Team
- Portfolio of evidence plus additional materials
- Accreditation visit incorporating:
 - o Informal discussions with parents outside and inside school
 - o Meeting with three Parent Forum parents (including parent governor)
 - o Tour round school with School Council representatives
 - o Informal discussions with children and staff during the tour
 - o Meeting with Head teacher Jane Skupien and Charter Champion Liz Richmond
 - o Second meeting with representatives of the Governing Body and Head teacher Jane Skupien and Charter Champion Liz Richmond



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o Correspondence from school

Conclusion

The team were delighted to receive evidence of outstanding Charter activity within the portfolio which was well organised and robust, and in the materials presented later, and see first-hand how the activity is implemented both during the visit and follow-up meeting with Governors.

The **depth** and **breadth** of commitment to creating a welcoming and caring ethos that reaches out and includes children and families from an eclectic range of backgrounds and with a significant range of strengths and skills as well as needs is inspiring.

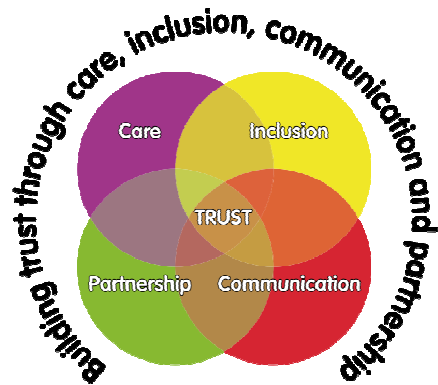
The **quality** of relationships between staff, parents/carers and children is friendly. There is a real family atmosphere. There is a clear drive and commitment from the Head teacher, Charter Champion and Governing Body to sustain improvement with warmth and genuine care. Communication is excellent, flexibly meeting a range of needs.

It is the strength of parental involvement that is perceived by parents, with whom we talked, to be the quality that makes Sitwell Infant School stand out from other schools. It is the team ethos that involves *all* representatives of the school community that stood out for us as the root through which activity is carefully nurtured and enabled to naturally flourish.

There is plenty to celebrate about Sitwell Infant School:

Welcome and Care

- ✓ Already good transition arrangements are developing even further to support children and alleviate parent/carers concerns
- ✓ Parents are encouraged to come into the building and classrooms and they are greeted personally
- ✓ Many adults say there is an informal, relaxed family atmosphere: "It is like my second home" (parent)
- ✓ Many feel it is a happy school: "There is never a sad face compared with other schools" (New parent)
- ✓ Parents/carers are observed to be respectful of one another
- ✓ Parents say they are confident their child is safe and secure
- ✓ Many children confidently say what they should do if they feel upset or sad e.g. use the 'friendship station'



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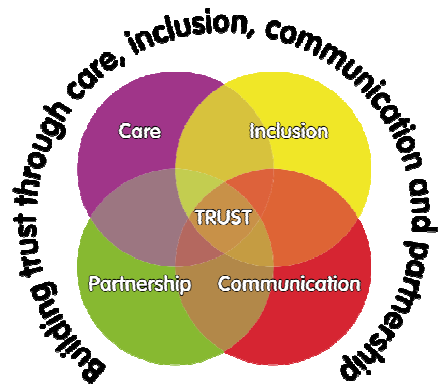
- ✓ We have observed fantastic use of the well-resourced and well maintained outdoor space, which is carefully zoned, and there is investment in learning activities and guidance
- ✓ There are robust staff induction and performance management systems including mentoring (for teaching and support staff) to ensure the welcoming ethos and good communication is sustained

Value and Include

- ✓ We noted that younger siblings are welcomed into classrooms and included in activities
- ✓ Every child is valued e.g. birthday parties
- ✓ There is somebody with whom every child and parent is able to speak and this is consistently planned for by staff
- ✓ Many parents say that they value the support and intervention on offer and speak about progress made by children with additional needs
- ✓ Governing Body representation reflects many elements of local community diversity and the Governors make themselves readily available to be approached
- ✓ Parents say the school reaches out to involve and support the community and we heard about examples of training for staff to build on this principle e.g. Jenny Mosley training
- ✓ Children with additional needs and their families are welcomed and there are weekly visits from children attending a specialist setting nearby; there is recognised good practice for supporting children with Down Syndrome
- ✓ Skills and expertise (child/parent/staff/governor) are utilised and shared to promote curriculum and wider school activities. This is a regular and developing feature of the academic year.
- ✓ Systems are in place that encourage members of the Governing Body to feel confident they can be open, honest and actively involved in school life

Communicate

- ✓ There is an open door ethos within the classrooms and the reception area.
- ✓ Senior staff are easily approached and keen to continually evaluate their practices and the perception that parents have of the school as an organisation.
- ✓ They use a twice yearly parental questionnaire to seek parental views and study the responses with thought and seriousness
- ✓ We noted a real desire to respond to issues raised and acknowledge both positive feedback and rare feedback that was not so positive, with the same degree of thought and importance
- ✓ We observed that communication with parents is frequent and varied, and strives to meet the needs of different groups e.g. they are using bilingual staff member skills to the full

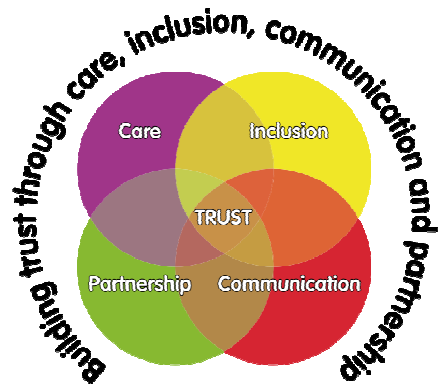


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- ✓ Systems are in place and are being further developed to identify 'harder to engage' groups
- ✓ There is recognition that reaching out to these groups involves building relationships; there are rich examples of skilful work with individual parents, beginning gently and sensitively to instil greater confidence and trust
- ✓ Communication and feedback takes a variety of forms, formal and informal, written, electronic and verbal, flexible according to need and context e.g. working parents, EAL parent 'drop-in'
- ✓ Staff make time to talk, create safe spaces and adapt flexibly to meet needs
- ✓ Many of the children know about the Golden Rules and the variety of reward systems, and can explain them in a way that is appropriate to their age
- ✓ The ideas that children bring are valued highly and staff actively use their thoughts to develop practice e.g. a new lawned area to extend outdoor play.
- ✓ We noted involvement in wider community events is well communicated and promoted (Rotherham and beyond) eg Roscars, Big Sing

Partnership

- ✓ We have noted and observed that *all* adults in school are involved with parents and children in a rich variety of ways
- ✓ Feedback from *all* parents, children and staff is invited and encouraged in a wide range of ways
- ✓ Staff and Governors are mindful to adopt a wide range of consultation methods that engage the maximum number of parents and continue to enhance ways of feeding back the impact of the information received, in creative ways e.g. the website.
- ✓ Formal and informal systems are in place to ensure children and parents' views influence policies and decision-making e.g. anti-bullying, enterprise policy, home-work drop-in for EAL families
- ✓ The Governing Body are familiar visitors taking a full and active interest in all aspects of school life and development
- ✓ There is a very active PTA and their work is widely recognised and valued by staff
- ✓ There is commitment to developing a Parent Forum and evaluating work so far and using this Forum to engage an ever widening group of parents.
- ✓ Evidence of training and support to develop parent and staff skills and confidence
- ✓ Clear evidence of positive responses to parent/child feedback e.g. flushing toilets in Foundation Stage, offering Halal meet at lunch-time and inviting LA officer – in so doing influencing LA systems.
- ✓ We noted also a range of other outcomes from direct parental comment that had positively influenced the practices in the school throughout the cycle of academic years.



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- ✓ Systems are strengthening to identify parents/carers who might be less confident/not so involved and we noted strategies that are now being employed at both a classroom and strategic level that will develop further in the future.

Feedback that the Accreditation Group received from parents also indicated;

- they would welcome more information about the outcomes of issues they raise: “not sure if ideas go forward”
- some would welcome access to the building in poor weather but also recognised the progress in this area with the recent addition of the sheltered roofing outside the main entrance area
- they would welcome more discussion about the timing of morning events

A strength of the work has been that the Head teacher and Charter Champion are always open to suggestions for development and have acted swiftly in response to feedback from both the Implementation and Accreditation teams.

The Accreditation Team noted strong evidence that inclusive activity underpins Charter statements at Gold standard.

We would anticipate that the ongoing commitment of the School Team, to strive to engage with all their parents and capture the voices of all their children, will further enrich this excellent practice in coming years.

We will be happy to feed back to staff about as a celebration of the Charter activity already taking place and plans to develop it even further.

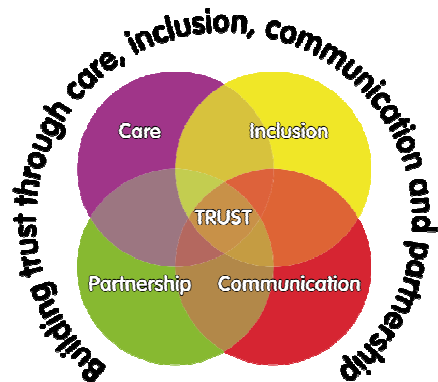
Award

Charter Gold Status within each Charter Principle.

Charter Gold Status overall.

We would like to congratulate Sitwell Infant School on being the first school in the borough to receive not only Charter Status but Charter Gold!

It is a fantastic achievement and credit must go to all the staff, governors, parents/carers and children at the school for their energy and enthusiasm for working



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together in this way. We are not anticipating many schools will be in a position to move to Charter Gold so quickly, if at all.

We have been appreciative of the opportunity to pilot the Accreditation Process at the school and, as already agreed, we would greatly value your feedback about the process.

We would like to invite your collaboration and contribution as the first Charter Gold Status School and we will make adjustments accordingly as an increasing number of schools follow your lead.

We will be in touch shortly about certification and the Charter celebration event.

Well Done. Be Proud!

Claire Whiting

Accreditation Team Lead
July 18th 2013