

Partnership with Parents

Penwortham Primary School

What the Judges Said

The judges were impressed with the school's commitment to working in partnership with parents. There were clear signs that they are thinking about coproduction with parents, as opposed to broadcasting to parents.

Context

Penwortham SEND vision statement:

Community: Everyone is included.

Unity: United by our school's values.

Opportunity: Aim for happiness and success.

Penwortham Primary School is bigger than average – 3 form entry mainstream primary school. It is situated in South West London. There are 647 pupils on roll; 33% are EAL learners and 39 different languages are spoken. 18% of children are entitled to Pupil Premium funding. Currently there are 17 pupils with EHCPs and there are 79 pupils on the SEN register for SEN support. The most significant need is speech, language and communication (8%) followed by ASD (1.5%), SEMH (1.4%) and specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) (1.2%). Ofsted judged the school as good in November 2017.

In 2017 the new SEND team structure was introduced. SEND team consist of: Head of inclusion – Deputy Head, SENCo, Class teacher, SEN administrator. The SEND team is actively supported by: Headteacher and Governing Body (SEND Governor).

Penwortham operates over 3 sides – all are easily accessible for children with disabilities (e.g. Ramps, lift). Each floor has accessible toilet. One classroom is fitted with a professional soundfield system that is beneficial for children with Hearing Impairment.

Penwortham's efforts to be an Inclusive School have been recognised widely.

Penwortham has recently achieved the following, hugely respected awards:

- IQM Centre of Excellence
- Right Respecting School – Gold Award
- The National Quality Mark for Coaching in Education – Silver

Entry

How do you go above and beyond the expectations?

“Penwortham Primary is clearly an inclusive school and this is felt as soon as you walk through the doors of the buildingThey care about children, they care about getting it right for individuals, they care about being adaptable, flexible and they care about offering bespoke solutions to children and families – but they frame that flexibility within a clearly defined philosophy, belief and set of principles, every student is at the centre of what they do”- IQM assessment, February 2020

We aim to include and involve our parents in every aspect of our school life and in decision making. Parents have been instrumental and actively involved in a process of getting an IQM and Right Respecting Awards.

“During the IQM assessment period a group of representative parents were interviewed by the assessor. The parents confirmed that Penwortham Primary values the role that parents play in the education of their children and is committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure best possible outcomes for all pupils. Penwortham Primary provides a wide range of communication opportunities to keep parents involved and engaged. These methods include parental consultation evenings, email, Twitter and an effective and up to date website.

The parents of pupils at the school are proud and supportive of Penwortham Primary, especially in recent years and they are quick to note significant improvements. Those spoken to were keen to emphasize a long list of positives which they felt were indicative of the school’s inclusive nature.

Parents commented on the “above and approach” that the SENCO brings to the school including visiting them at home to help with routines to always being available if they need support.” IQM report, 2020

All staff at Penwortham Primary value the role that parents play in the education of their children and are committed to working in partnership with them to ensure best possible outcomes for all pupils.

We have an “Open Door Policy”, parents are always welcome to contact the SENCO and other members of SEND team. We aim to offer them support and guidance as soon as possible. We provide a wide range of communication opportunities to keep parents involved and engaged. These methods include parental consultation evenings, email, Twitter and an effective and up to date website.

At the beginning of the academic year we invite our parents to meet with the SENCO and a TA who supports the child. 100% parents told us that this practice is

such a great way of getting to know the support staff who play a very important role in child's education.

We actively support parents in accessing additional help through the Local offer. We help parents to apply for Wandsworth's WAND Card. The card can be used by families to get extra support when they are out and about without having to explain their child's disabilities every time.

We hold regular – termly coffee mornings for parents of SEND children. We invite professional speakers such as: representatives from our Borough, Speech and language therapists, Place 2 Be councillors etc.

“Coffee mornings have been helpful in giving useful information to parents and also enabling parents of SEN children to meet each other and feel less isolated” (Year 2 Parent.)

To offer even more targeted and effective support for the most vulnerable families we organise half termly home visits – the SENCo with ELSA mentor visit parents to share resources and help them to implement appropriate strategies to support issues like: behaviour, sleeping, eating, routines, attention and listening.

“I feel that this is a very good initiative and we get a lot from this support. I have three children with special needs and the visits helped our family to deal with challenging behaviours and our daughter finally goes to bed without any problems. We are very thankful and lucky as not many schools go that far”.(Year 1 Parent)

Here at Penwortham we understand the importance on transitions. All children with SEN are provided with a transition booklet at the end of each academic year, we start transition process to secondary school as early as in Year 5. We organise secondary transfer workshop for parents of pupils with EHCPs and we visit potential schools with the parents.

Work that all staff of Penwortham has been praised by parents, here are some comments they have made about us:

“ I am incredibly thankful for such a hard work and dedication of the SENCo and her team. The process of getting an EHCP for my son was very smooth and quick. I felt supported all the way.” (Year 1 parent)

“I am greatly pleased with the level of support we have received by the friendly staff at Penwortham and their Senco department. My daughter has an excellent caring, hardworking support worker and a very organised, diligent and efficient Senco. My daughter has had a stroke at birth so she has a variety of complex medical needs and several doctors and professionals working with her. The school has played a huge extremely efficient role in helping to liaise and coordinate with all of my daughter’s professionals. They involve me in decisions and discuss changes with me and update me regularly.

Also they advise me regarding referrals and listen to my suggestions regarding any additional requirements or external referrals, tools or therapy required. The school has successfully incorporated the doctors strategies and suggestions and has gone out of their way to perform several adaptations in order to help improve my daughter’s condition. As well as helping her to keep up with her peers and to achieve the targets set by the various professions involved. I also feel that my daughter’s views are taken into account and she even feels valued at school which she loves. I have seen interview videos of her in the setting during her annual EHCP meetings and she is present during the review meetings throughout the year.

Lastly in addition to all this, the school has even taken into account the welfare of Sen parents and has kindly set up a successful termly SEN coffee morning. From which an active WhatsApp group has been created with the aim of offering support and advice and becoming a platform and parent voice. There have been various meetups, friendships have been formed and parents have gained a wider support network”. (Year 2 parent)

“I feel that my views have been heard and responded to when expressing concerns about my son. For example, in year one, he had to share a playground with year two children, which was a big change for him, as in reception the children had their own playground. My son is not steady on his feet, and was getting knocked over a lot, so the teacher spoke to senior management and they agreed to change the playtimes for the year 1 children so that they were not out in the playground with the year 2 children. This helped a lot to make my son feel more confident in the playground. Now he is in year 2 and much more relaxed to play in the ground.

I feel that the school is a safe environment for my son, and that he is cared for and happy there, despite his additional needs” (Year 3 Parent)

How is your work is innovative?

We strongly believe that our passion for inclusion and hard work makes a significant and positive difference to our most vulnerable pupils and their families.

Reason for entering the SEND Award 2020

We are extremely proud of the provision we provide for our SEN children and support we offer to their families. We are very pleased to see that children with special needs are thriving in our setting. "This is a very caring, nurturing school and my son is very happy there". (year 2 Parent).

Last year we have been nominated for SEND National Award in category of Partnership with Parents. Although we did not win, we were praised and given a very positive and encouraging feedback from the judges:" Thank you for your entry, you are clearly doing a lot for your children. We felt that your entry for this category would benefit from more evidence of how you are working side-by-side with parents to coproduce policies or documents."

Winning this prestigious SEND Award 2020 would reassure us that we serving our SEND children and their families well and that we make a positive difference to their lives. It would also inspire us to do much more – above and beyond, so the most vulnerable pupils, despite their additional needs can achieve their full potential and become happy, independent and confident young people.

How is this work sustained over at least two years?

We are very proud that our families feel valued and supported in our school. Our continued efforts to provide the best possible support for our parents were recognised and summarised in the final IQM report: "Open door policy and the SENCO is always available to support them. At home support to ensure there is a united approach to supporting the families and children. Empowering parents through training and information sessions. External agency sessions to further support and empower parents in the school. Regular coffee mornings to parents to meet and support each other.