



Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru
National Academy for
Educational Leadership Wales

Leading Investors in Families



Leading a whole school system at Llanhari Primary involves not just those within the school building, but its families and wider communities. We work tirelessly to engage parents and families in the education of their children, something recognised by Estyn as excellent practice in 2016. This was recognised again this week, when we were presented with the Investors in Families award, 'Diamond' standard – the highest standard that can be achieved and the first school in Wales to achieve it. We are proud to be leading the way!

“Family Engagement at Llanhari Primary School is a fully embedded whole school strategy with all stakeholders understanding and supporting the school’s vision.”

We achieved our first Investors in Families award in April 2015, meeting the 'Seven Core Aims' and producing our self-evaluation as evidence. In recent years the Investors in Families organisation has gone through a restructure and now hosts an online platform and new accreditation standards. The new revised standards offer the same seven core aims, but now includes four levels of attainment – Emerald, Sapphire, Amethyst and Diamond. Achieving the diamond standard recognises the sustained commitment over a number of years to our family engagement.

Meet our Associates

Emma has been the headteacher of Llanhari Primary School for six years and has had a positive impact upon her school, notably within inclusivity and school improvement. Emma works closely with families and communities and is actively engaged with the Action Research Project and activities, sitting on the local authority's 'Traded Services' board and working with them to develop SLAs and services for schools

“We are developing our pupils as future leaders, ethical, informed citizens that see themselves as part of a community that they care about and that cares about them”

Planning Family Engagement

Yes, we achieved the award because of our wide range of activities. In particular our Parent Council; our Community Links and our PDG virtual voucher scheme. However, a key to our success in achieving the 'Diamond' standard was the planning, monitoring and evaluation of everything we do.



Each year since 2014 we have produced an action plan specifically for family engagement using the seven core aims to ensure breadth of engagement. However, we didn't produce the action plan just to achieve a reaccreditation of the award, as for a number of years the Investors in Families organisation was halted. We found the process of working towards the award in this way, highly effective and continued following the model. Our action plans are monitored and reviewed every half term by a Parent and Community sub-committee of the governing body – one specifically created for this role. At the end of the year the action plan is evaluated; we don't always achieve everything we wanted and often actions are added throughout the year. The self-evaluation document is reviewed, ensuring a record of all activities is kept up to date. Following that, the new action plan is developed with the Parent Council and governing body sub-committee and the cycle starts again.



Parents as Leaders

A key to achieving the 'Diamond' standard was our engagement of parents in the planning of activities. Fact finding workshops were held and surveys were circulated and analysed by the parent council. This enabled us to target activities where they were most needed, at times that were most convenient. An example of where this worked well was when parents requested accredited training courses that we were then able to broker. A Food Hygiene course was arranged and well attended by both parents and community members. Following this we had two delegates that went on to gain employment as a direct result of achieving the accreditation.

Our Parent Council has been in place for seven years and is an extremely important vehicle for developing the work of the school. The Council produce a range of school documentation which the school uses for developing its work with families and the community. The agenda for the Parent Council meetings always includes strategic direction, successful elements of the school and any concerns the parent body has indicated.

“It is an exemplary model, one that many schools can learn from.”

Investors in Families accreditation report May 2019



Pupils as Leaders

The school has a range of very proactive pupil groups that promote pupil voice across the school. The school has a Senedd and all Key Stage 2 children belong to one of the committees. There is a School Council, ECO Council, Criw Cymraeg, Digital Leaders, Healthy Heroes, Wildlife Warriors and the Press Office. These are very proactive in developing and refining school policy and gathering the views of pupils. Surveys carried out by pupils on extra-curricular provision are particularly effective and feed into our action plans.

“The children have big responsibilities for school improvement and take these responsibilities very seriously”

Investors in Families accreditation report May 2019

Measuring impact

Our ability to show impact over time was another key to us achieving the diamond standard status - quantitative and qualitative evaluation of our work. It is very difficult to measure the success of parent engagement activities – very often we just sense that something worked or didn't. However, if we could measure it we did! We made good use of survey monkey to gauge views and analysed groups of pupil data that were involved in different projects.

Sharing with the wider system

Our work with parents, particularly our vision and values work, our innovative projects and our parent workshops are underpinned by the principles of 'Schools as a learning organisation'. Following our diamond standard award we were asked to present and open the summer term conference, focusing on our Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER) cycle, Parent Council, Community Links and Pupil Development Grant (PDG) voucher scheme. We have shared our Parent Council model with many schools. Minutes of meetings and publications are easily accessible on our website and we are happy to share any resources. In the spirit of 'Learning with and from the external environment and wider learning system', we are happy to receive visitors from other schools interested in our work, or those engaging with the Investors in Families process for the first time. We would also welcome approaches from potential external collaborators interested in developing parents and the community as partners in the education of their children.

The school is striving to ensure the four purposes of the curriculum are met with the support of parents and the community, we cannot do this alone. We are developing our pupils as future leaders, ethical, informed citizens that see themselves as part of a community that they care about and that cares about them. Together we are investing in the future of our communities. We are extremely proud to be recognised with this award. However, our emphasis on family engagement isn't to get an award – it's the reward of knowing and feeling the school is truly part of a larger community that supports the achievement and wellbeing of our pupils.

For more information, visit

www.nael.cymru