## Case Study

**Establishment name:** Clifton Primary School  
**Lancashire no.:** 04/045  
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**Award granted:** Best Practice  
**Project title:** The School’s Ethos, Commitment and Partnership with Parents through a High Quality Website.

### Project summary
The development and use of a high quality school website to reinvigorate parent partnership with the school and with their child’s education in order to raise standards across the school.

### Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?
Quality of the school website in engaging an active parental interest in their own child’s development and educational journey due to positive development and rather than growing passive interest.

### Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:
- [ ] Be healthy
- [x] Make a positive contribution
- [ ] Stay Safe
- [x] Enjoy and achieve
- [ ] Achieve economic well-being

### What were you hoping to achieve?
A good website which would share pupil achievement and school information in an easily accessible way for parents and extended families.

### How did you identify the need for this practice?
- Initially identified from working with local High School and realisation that more schools were developing websites
- From 'Green' angle, that we could share information faster and at less cost and damage to environment - our involvement in Eco Schools
- Through Parent Questionnaires and Pupil Questionnaires identifying that majority of households had access to computers at home
- Through discussions with PTA group on how we could use a website to share information more effectively
- Through impetus of ICT Teaching Assistant and Headteacher to make website useful for all visitors, parents, children, governors, staff and occasional guests.
Briefly describe the main characteristics of the school?

- Clifton is an urban school on the edges of both St Anne's and Lytham and caters for 240 pupils in 8 class bases (4 Infant and 4 Junior). It has recently undergone some major refurbishment, especially for ICT, to ensure excellent access to the latest technology for teachers and children.
- It has a very mixed socio economic background ranging from A to E with a growing number of lower socio-economic groupings.
- The school has a higher than average SEN profile compared to most other local schools and this accounts for a wide diversity of SEN amongst the children - hearing impaired, downs syndrome, medical conditions, autism, aspergers, behaviour issues, physical impairments.

What did you do?

- Initially the ICT Teaching Assistant developed a basic site which started to share a few pictures and the school newsletter. Very quickly this was seen as not being enough for the parents and we offered them the opportunity to sign up to receiving school newsletters by email. This was readily taken up with 40% of parents signing up immediately.
- The Headteacher then developed this further by creating a distribution list stored on his computer and alerted parents to event changes and upcoming events as needed.
- Following an initial review by Headteacher and TA, the website then grew quickly in 2006 to offer specific policies and forms online together with PowerPoint slideshows of what the children were doing in school. Initial plans for a Virtual Tour were abandoned due to not working through the software used to publish the website.
- Headteacher and TA then created a Curriculum Support website to run alongside the main website to provide parents, pupils and teachers with websites which would support learning and the curriculum. Pupils and parents then sent in suggestions for other sites and this grew even further.
- Due to the rapid growth the Headteacher and TA then split the maintenance of the site between themselves (HT taking main website) and the TA started to develop each class’s own mini-website page based around the current learning and experiences they were having.
- The website has gone from strength to strength and is now used as one of the main ways to communicate with parents/children, to share work with parents/other relatives and to support the education of the children.
- The Headteacher also developed a Staff/Governor website as a secure way of sharing information with governors regarding their roles and responsibilities, as well as data analysis and school development planning paperwork.
- In 2008 the School Council added their own website link and now keep that updated themselves; this was followed by the development of a Healthy Schools Team website by that group of children.
- Early 2009 saw the development of an Extended Services website by the school which is now being used by schools across the Fylde for signposting additional activities and support to parents, as well as the Children’s Trust
members and services sharing information via it.

- In 2009 we saw the launch of our Moodle site which is still being developed by the IT TA and parents and children will have full access to it during 2010.

### Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

- Headteacher and IT TA have taken the lead role but all members of the community have been involved and have responsibility for their own part of the website
- Governors have played a big role in suggesting other links for parents and developing their own information base
- The PTA have also suggested more links and other information that they feel parents would like to access
- The children regularly suggest updates to websites and ask for specific work to be shared with their parents through the website.

### How has the progress of the project been monitored and evaluated?

The project has been reviewed and monitored each term (if not more often) by the Headteacher and the IT TA. Questionnaires about the use of the website are sent out annually and majority of parents are extremely pleased with the service the website provides and the information shared there.

We have now increased our parent base for email updates (called our Clifton E-Community) to 80% and through a new initiative linked to Leading Parent Partnership and Extended Schools we are hoping to increase this further by providing access to computers in school for families who do not already have that access.

We also have monitoring software built into the website so that we can monitor the numbers using the site together with which pages are being accessed most, where the users live within the world and what searches they are doing. These analysis tools have supported the changes we have made.

### How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

The website is constantly being updated and changed to ensure that it is user friendly for all and easily navigated. Recently the website had an overhaul due to its growing unwieldiness and separate sections have been developed. The school aims to keep this modification and improvement going continually.

### What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

From parent and pupil comment, more of them are now actively engaged in learning outside of school through the school website. From sharing their work with their parents through pictures on their own webpage, to using the links for further study on their class webpage, to using the Curriculum support website to starting to use Moodle.
All children have enjoyed being able to continue to share their work and knowledge at home (and not just with parents but with relatives across the country and world - some have been sharing their work each term with relatives in India and Australia). This means that children are actively engaging in explaining what they have been doing in school and therefore compounding their knowledge well.

Recent pupil questionnaire evidence shows that the children feel that the website enables them to continue their learning outside of school at their own pace and to revisit concepts and themes. Year 6 pupils especially have felt that the links to websites such as Bite Size have supported their learning towards their annual tests.

**What are the next stages in the development process?**

The biggest next step for the school is the full launch of its Moodle site across the school. This is being used in school at the moment and some pages are accessible from home. By Easter 2010 it is aimed to be launched and then used both in school and at home and will support all areas of the curriculum and all themes covered within school.

**What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?**

- It is an ideal and easy-to-use tool to share information with all stakeholders quickly and easily and support children in their learning by providing them with a platform for sharing their work and their ideas with their parents.
- It maintains the interest of the majority of pupils in their learning experience by enabling them to access further support in learning on their own in a safe and easy to use environment.

**Any other comments:**

Take your time! Don't aim for an all-singing and all-dancing website at first and don't put lots of headings on and then leave them with 'Under Development' on them for a long time. It is far better not to have them there than say that as it becomes noticeable when those pages never seem to get developed.

Once you know how to develop a site, you can start adding to it and alerting children and parents to the changes; over a few years your website will grow and flourish.