

# Parental Engagement Quality Standard

The Petchey Academy

Assessment report



## School details

School Name	The Petchey Academy
Address	Shacklewell Lane Hackney London E8 2EY, E8 2EY
Head teacher	Olivia Cole
Type of school	Sponsored Academy with specialism in Health Care and Medical Sciences
Additional information	Jack Petchey

## Assessment details

Date of assessment	05 June 2015
Peer assessor	Camilla Chandler-Mant
Main staff contact	Laura Shenton and Thomas Janvrin
Key individuals involved in assessment	A range of teaching and non- teaching staff, a school governor and parents of students
Award	Gold
Expiry date	05 June 2018

## Introduction (context of school)

### **The following information was provided by the school:**

The Petchey Academy is a new academy with 54 feeder schools across Hackney & Islington, It is situated in a culturally diverse and comparatively deprived area. The school offers a plethora of options for Petchey parents to become involved in both supporting their child's learning as well as activities and events more generally. The school has applied for the Parental Engagement Quality Standard to recognise and celebrate the strong practice that already exists and stimulate further commitment and development from all of our stakeholders.

There are 1190 students on roll at the academy from Year 7-13 with 54% eligible for Pupil Premium Deprivation Funding and 30% with Special Educational Needs and 36% of students have a language other than English as their first language. The schools most recent Ofsted was in March 2015 and the school was ranked as Good with Outstanding Leadership and particular praise was given to our pastoral and student support features. Exam results for GCSE and A Level have fluctuated but are consistently in line with, or exceeding national expectations when looking at grade achievement, however the start point of the students that enter the academy is lower than national averages and therefore our progress and value added is recognised as Outstanding. Recent A Level students in 2014 achieved the highest Average Point Score in the borough.

The academy is committed to working with parents and carers to ensure that “traditional values in a modern world” become an intrinsic part of students’ lives both within the academy and at home.

## Overview of assessment

Evidence submitted by staff at the Petchey Academy for the Parental Engagement assessment was excellent. This allowed the assessor to gain a thorough overview of the work of the school before arrival. The assessment day was very well planned. The assessor was able to talk extensively with the staff, students and a group of parents. All the standards of the PEQS were properly addressed and achieved to a very high standard.

Parental engagement at The Petchey Academy is excellent. All staff interviewed were fully engaged with the need to work in partnership with parents, and parents interviewed were full of praise about how the school seeks to communicate with them. The school leadership fully understand that engaging with parents can make a fundamental difference to the student's attainment and achievement at the school. This knowledge has led to a structured and systematic approach to engaging with parents; this area is not a bolt-on to what the school does but embedded in the school management and structures. Crucially all students are encouraged to achieve their very best and provided with the wide range of opportunities in order that they can shine no matter what their gift or talent.

## Assessment review

### School ethos

The culture and climate at The Petchey Academy is one of partnership and valuing the family. The school understands that this partnership will help ensure the students engage fully with their education. Staff interviewed were able to describe the gradual development of PE at the school over a number of years to the point where it is now central to how the school approaches the education of the young people. The Petchey Academy has appointed a member of staff to lead on parental engagement which shows a huge commitment to the area. The Head teacher is seen as friendly and approachable by parents at the school; she makes a point of being readily available to parent's every day. Parents appreciate this visibility and feel that they 'know the Head' simply because they see her on a regular basis. Parents were able to detail the huge number of ways the school engages with them. The explained both formal and informal communication done through almost every aspect of the school's work including academic curriculum areas, pastoral care, extra-curricular provision and community engagement. It is clear that there is a strategy in place to build engagement and it has not just been left to ad hoc arrangements.

The Petchey Academy has clear statements of vision, mission and values underpinned by a clear sense of community. The Petchey Academy is a community school and all students come from within 2 kilometres of the school. The influence of Jack Petchey is very evident at the school; when talking to students, parents and staff they all feel Mr Petchey has a very positive influence over the school ethos. On arrival each student is given a wooden acorn symbolising their future growth at the school and Mr Petchey's Maxim “If I think I can, I can” symbolises the character of the school. The school dinner service is a very important part of the school day; meals at The Petchey Academy are eaten as a school family and there is an onsite chef providing high quality nutritious food. Staff and students all eat together with everyone taking responsibility of serving and clearing away. Jack Petchey's influence at the school promotes a feeling of a family community; everyone is being looked after and cared for. This pastoral care is underpinned by very high standards and expectation of the students to behave well and achieve their very best.

All standards have been fully met within this area; evidence submitted detailed the enormous lengths the school goes to in order to engage all its parents including letters, phone calls, information evenings, the school website, the VLE and school Intranet and e-mail. Capacity for parental engagement at the school is excellent with six dedicated members of staff as well as a whole staffing body who see PE as a priority on a day to day basis. Mechanisms exist to allow and encourage parents to contribute to the ambitions and vision of the school; Petchey Academy runs a parents blog (forum) on the Parent's Portal and a Petchey Parent group is being developed. Two parent governors work very closely with the leadership team.

### **Parental engagement with learning and development**

Parental engagement with the learning process at The Petchey Academy is extremely good. The staff have used an incremental approach to build a solid foundation of approaches and activities that are constantly changing as the school evolves. The school provides bespoke help for parents that find it difficult to attend meetings at school and staff are prepared to do home visits when necessary.

Parental engagement does support all aspects of the children's learning and the Academy has invested in various members of staff with a specific parental engagement remit. The Head of Student Welfare looks after all aspects of student's health and wellbeing. The post holder was able to describe the huge number of ways she engages with parents; she sets out to build a rapport with families and is able to support families when they are at their most vulnerable. Home visits are integral to the success of the post holder's work and parents can rely on this member of staff to help them with the wide range of different social issues they might face. This post holder supports families by being proactive but also simply listening when required; the professional capacity brought by this member of staff is enormous and central to the success of vulnerable students at the school. The Petchey Academy also employs a Safer Schools Police Officer who works proactively with families to prevent young people becoming involved in or falling victim to crime, also a family support worker who carries out a number of engagement tasks including running workshops for parents on various themes.

Parental engagement is linked to learning and development in the home. Students at the Petchey Academy were able to pinpoint the importance of the school engaging with their parents and give solid examples of how that was done. IT systems were mentioned on several occasions and the "Parent's Portal" was seen as a very useful tool allowing parents to better understand what was going on during the school day. Students interviewed explained that more information made parents 'more proactive' in terms of engaging with their children's learning and behaviour and the school day more transparent to parents by virtue of the available information. The students also highlighted how parents were able to celebrate the work of students by attending a range of different school events; this was seen as very positive indeed. Evidence submitted listed the huge number of ways parents were able to celebrate success alongside their children including high profile events such as the Jack Petchey Award winners Principals Tea and parents are also provided with various resources including useful internet links, educational extension activities available on the parent's portal and suggestions for low cost educational experiences in London.

The promotion of good behaviour is highly evident at the Petchey Academy, and parents are encouraged to support positive behaviour in a range of different ways including discussion of issues at parent groups and forums, supporting the school's behaviour policy, and attending workshops promoting good attendance. When issues arise parents are fully encouraged to support the re-integration of their children back into the school community.

Sixth Form provision at The Petchey Academy is extremely good and a large number of Students go on to study at Higher Education level. Parental engagement in this area remains a very high priority and the Head of Sixth Form was able to describe the range of methods used to engage parents in the learning process. Examples of provision included targeted parents evenings, presentations to parents about HE finance from the widening participation partner 'Into University' and work experience meetings which also involve parents.

All standards have been met within this area; the process of providing life-long learning opportunities for parents at the academy is developing and the school plans to run a variety of different classes for parents in the future. At the moment the school sign posts ESOL classes for parents in the local area and all parents and carers are able to join the sports club and make use of the sports facilities.

### **Information**

Information available to parents about the school and their children's progress is excellent; information is provided in a wide variety of different ways including text translations and translators for families for whom English is not their first language. The school produces a weekly newsletter reminding parents of forthcoming events and also uses Facebook, Twitter, e-mail and text to provide regular information for parents. Parents interviewed felt that the 'Parents Portal' was an excellent provision providing a range of important information about their children. The school website is solid and has a dedicated parent's area providing a range of useful information.

The assessor interviewed the Head of Year 7 and the Head of Year 11. Those members of staff were able to detail the numerous ways they engage with parents. The approach is very personal and understanding and emphasises that the education of the students is a partnership between the school and the parents. All members of staff spoken to at The Petchey Academy understood that they were talking 'to and with' parents rather than 'at' them thus setting up an equal and accessible relationship that is in the best interests of the students. Staff emphasised the 'really personal relationships' that have been made with many parents who would traditionally have found school a daunting place to engage with.

The assessor also interviewed a Parent Governor who was able to detail the progressive development of parental engagement at the school. The Governing Body takes feedback from the various parent's forums and acts on that feedback. The Role of the Communications & Marketing Manager was highlighted as extremely important by many of the parents interviewed; the post holder was described as a 'pivot' for parental engagement always available and ready to talk with parents no matter what the issue. The personality and capacity that this role brought to the school was seen as extremely important. The role of the

Assistant Head in charge of Parental Engagement was also seen as very important. It was rightly felt that having staff in charge of PE was the reason it had improved so much. Parents also felt that the Headteacher was available to solve problems when they occurred and that the Parent's Forum gave parents 'a place to go' when they felt issues needed to be addressed. All areas of this standard have been fully met. A particular strength of the school is the range of ways information is provided to parents about the progress of the students. Progressive IT systems providing real time information are seen as extremely helpful complementing documentation and practical staff activities. The school was able to list a huge number of regular actions that take place and staff described the continuous development in this area.

## Consultation

The Petchey Academy consults regularly with parents both formally and informally. The school recognises that their approach has developed from being rather ad hoc to far more systematic. Petchey Staff were able to give a range of examples of how the school had consulted with families and then reacted to that consultation. The school staff pointed out that this academic year parental and stakeholder engagement has been a priority for the senior leadership of the school and this has been disseminated to the school departments. Middle leaders have been encouraged to build consultation with parents into their approach to teaching and learning thus providing staff with broader and deeper information about how they develop the school provision.

The academy runs a 'Petchey Parents Group'. This is a consultation group where the parents drive the agenda; they have looked at areas such as home learning, e-safety and the Family Service. The school sees this group as good auditors of the school provision (either in place or being developed). In order to ensure as many parents as possible can access this group the meetings are held at two different times in order to accommodate working parents. The school runs a 'Parents Blog' which acts as a vehicle for parents to bring up issues that they want to address.

During the assessment visit the assessor also met with a group of Turkish parents; the school has worked very hard to engage this particular group and that hard work has resulted in a group of parents who are fully committed to the development of the school and feel that they play an active role in the development of the organisation. The school employs a Turkish speaker to help translate the needs of the group and a bond with this particular member of staff has clearly been made. Parents seemed completely at home at the school and completely willing to share their options and ideas about the school provision. It is clear that the ethos at The Petchey Academy supports and promotes all range of consultation with parents; the school staff are innovative in their approach and seek to hear the views of the hardest to reach parents. This approach is very successful.

## Impact and benefit for students

Parental engagement at The Petchey Academy is clearly having a very positive effect on the attitudes, behaviour, attendance and outcomes of the students. Though it is clearly the sum total of the provision that the school provides that ultimately decides the success of the young people, this element of the academy provision is making an enormous contribution. Feedback from parents and students indicates that the engagement is seen as very positive and very much a part of the family orientated ethos of the school. The most recent Ofsted inspection was very positive about the school provision and outcomes; student's achievement in 2014 was the best of the last 3 years, most ethnic groups outperformed their peers in their respective group nationally and overall and disadvantaged students are making significantly good progress.

The inspection also noted that 'The well-being of students, including provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is paramount to their learning. As a result, well-thought-out approaches to supporting them mean they are prepared for learning and achieving well' and 'Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the academy's ethos, its leadership and work with their children. The few spoken to were keen to emphasise the very good and regular communication system which keeps them well informed about all aspects of the academy's work'.

Overall there is sufficient evidence to point to parental engagement being a key driver in the success of the school

## Recommendations and closing remarks

Overall parental engagement at The Petchey Academy is outstanding; huge amounts of time is put into engaging with parents and the school understands that partnership working is an imperative if students and their families are to become lifelong learners. The Petchey Academy engages with parents to ensure that every student achieves their very best no matter what their background. In terms of long term success all the elements are in place; the school has created capacity by employing a senior member of staff to lead the initiative, curriculum areas and pastoral staff work closely with parents, relationships with parents appear very positive and on an equal footing, partnership working is embedded in the culture of the school and use of technology enhances the development of relationships.

The Petchey Academy satisfies all the standards of the PEQS Gold Award. In terms of future development there are no obvious issues that should be addressed at this point, however as parental engagement activities mature the school leadership and governors may want to consider how parents become more involved in the strategic direction setting of the organisation. Ongoing development of life-long learning opportunities for parents and families is recognised as a need at the school and staff have this development in their sights.

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