

The Shared Learning Newsletter

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A KS3 pupil working with his mother on activities based on the theme of citizenship

Share and citizenship

There is a practical emphasis in Share activities, with intergenerational and family discussion, planning, research, negotiation and problem solving, all linked to literacy, numeracy and ICT. For example, the activity, 'Success story' encourages the parent and the child to set targets and to discuss, recognise and record the child's achievements. This increases a child's confidence and sense of worth. 'Quick! What's the number?' encourages parents and children to identify emergency numbers and to create a family directory. This helps the child to learn about community services. 'Save our school' asks families to become actively involved in a local issue. Other topics include local government, equal opportunities, and the environment.

Accreditation

Share has also developed twelve accreditation units for parents, through the Open College Network. One of these, 'Right on!' is solely devoted to the theme of citizenship, and recognises the important part that parents have to play in helping their children become responsible citizens.

Citizenship

Citizenship education is now part of the Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship framework in primary schools and will be a compulsory subject from September 2002 in secondary schools. The decision to incorporate citizenship education into the curriculum stemmed from the White Paper, *Excellence in schools* (1998), which drew attention to the need to address the wider aspects of young people's development, to reassure them that their voices are heard and that their actions can make a difference to society, and to engender a sense of belonging to their community. The White Paper stressed that schools can help by teaching pupils the nature of democracy and the duties, responsibilities and rights of citizens.

Active citizenship

Professor Tim Brighouse emphasises the need for 'active' citizenship: 'Citizenship is the key to our collective future, but not as an extra to the information-dominated curriculum ... it needs to be everything in school life.' This has been echoed by Professor Bernard Crick and in the *Citizenship schools* report, which states that involving children in their own learning and in school life increases motivation and achievement. As Bill Lucas, the Chief Executive of the Campaign for Learning, points out:

... by engaging parents and the wider community, schools can develop the untapped potential of family and community learning. For our young people, the motivating prospect of being listened to will develop lifelong learning and life-wide skills.' Those involved in Share have always firmly believed in the importance of the active participation of parents and other learning partners in their children's education. At Key Stage 3, Share has incorporated 'citizenship' activities, based on the three strands of Citizenship education: Social and moral responsibility, Community involvement, and Political literacy.



A parent in Walsall with some work she has done for a KS1 Citizenship activity

Share at Key Stage 3

Share changes homework policy for KS3 pupils!



Share pupils at Thistley Hough High School with Share group leader Jill Shaw

Share has bite!

Share parents at Thistley Hough High School, in Stoke-on-Trent, have had a great impact on the school's homework policy. Through their comments about their difficulties in understanding what their children had to do and not being able to help them, and after seeing the higher quality of work being produced in Share activities, the school has completely revised its homework policy for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Jill Shaw, the Literacy Co-ordinator and KS3 Strategy Manager, who leads the Share group, says that they wouldn't have realised the extent of the problem, if it hadn't been for the Share parents.

How will the homework change?

Homework is now to be called 'Extended learning' and will consist of pre-printed skills-based tasks, handed out at the beginning of each term. The tasks will be based on the Share model and will comprise a mixture of Share activities (generic skills across the core subjects) and subject-led tasks, with easily understood learning objectives, extension activities and performance indicators, which will help parents and children see where marks are to be gained. Bill Edwards, a father who attends the Share meetings with his wife, is very much in favour of the skills-based approach. He welcomes the chance to be fully involved in the homework tasks and says that he is very interested in how his son learns, as much as in what he learns. These parents are so committed to Share that they are going to attend the New Intake Evening and recruit parents for next year. They will also be presented with certificates at this event.

What are the Share pupils up to?

They have formed a 'Share' club and meet at lunchtimes. As an end of year treat, they are going bowling, followed by a trip to McDonald's. In November, the Share pupils will be taking part in the school's annual 'Language festival' for Year 6 pupils. The aim is to raise awareness of different languages by using interpersonal skills to lead activities – for example, running a French ice-cream shop, or getting involved in activities based on Latin or Bangla.

'Steps to personal success'

The Share parents have been participating in 'Steps to excellence for personal success', a thought-provoking two-day course, run by the Pacific Institute, which helps people to 'envision success' and to set targets, thereby improving their lives.

Next year?

The two groups of Share parents have attended more than thirty sessions this year and want to continue next year. Thistley Hough High School has decided to extend the evening group to include ICT for parents who have expressed an interest in this area and it will be offering a 'Cybercafe', run by Bill Edwards, a Share parent. This will run for two hours, as a drop-in centre, during which the Share meeting will take place.



Share group at Castleford High School, Wakefield

Share news ...

Nottingham gains credits



Pictured here with Liz Barnes, Nottingham's Share Co-ordinator, are parents from Brocklewood Infant and Nursery School and Sycamore Infant and Nursery School. They are among the first in Nottingham City to gain accreditation from the Open College Network for the work they have done with their children. For a couple of parents, it is the first time they have ever received a certificate. As Liz Barnes commented: 'It's wonderful! I was really thrilled to see these parents receive their certificates and to see how much their confidence has grown.' All the parents have continued to study and have started courses at New College in subjects such as encaustic art, sign language and aromatherapy.



Beanz meanz Share!

The bean-growing competition at Welbeck Community First School in Ashington, Northumberland, was a great success with both parents and children. The children were all invited to the Share parents' meeting for the official measuring and prize-giving. The winner of the competition was Claire Turnbull, whose bean grew to fifty centimetres. Claire's dad is the captain of a ship and he has become so involved in Share that he is finishing off his accreditation by e-mail off the coast of Japan!

The Share parents at Wellbeck School are all very interested in ICT and would like to combine their Share activities with gaining the computer accreditation unit, so the ICT Co-ordinator has agreed to be trained as a Share teacher. Karen Hudson, the current Share teacher is taking up a new post at the Coquet Early Excellence Centre in the autumn term. We wish her luck and hope to see her involved again with Share!



Measuring the height of the beans

Thank you Share!

Anne Schofield, a Family Learning Co-ordinator in Leicester, has sent in this lovely letter from Malika Daudbhai, a parent at Sandfield Close Primary School:

'I am Malika Daudbhai and I am writing about how Share has become a part of my life and how it has helped my children and me. I am the mother of three beautiful children, one is 15 and is in upper school, and the other is in Year 1.

I first heard about the Share Group in Sandfield Close, where I pick up and drop my younger son daily. At the start I was quite nervous, but then found out there was nothing to be worried about. I am very pleased that I have joined the group and have learnt so many things from Share. I only wish that I could have found something similar to Share before, when my older son was at primary school and needed help, which at that time I couldn't give. But now whenever my 5 year old son needs help, I am capable of giving it to him, as well as to my older son.

Since I joined the Share group, the bond in the relationship with my children has become stronger, has turned more friendly and we are closer than before. I have learnt the skills of how to listen to a child, without ignoring them. I have also learnt to give more support to my kids, and to be patient, to be fair and many other things to help make my children happy. In addition, my family has become closer, and all the activities that Share provided were done as a proper family. These activities have changed parts of my life by giving us something to do, some fun, as well as quality time.

Thank you, Share, and to the teachers, for all your kind support, help and encouragement. I couldn't have reached this far without each and every one of you. I cannot thank you enough.'

From Malika Daudbhai

... from around the country

Puppets and parents

Ten parents at Billinge Chapel End School meet regularly to plan and discuss Share activities for their children. The photo on the right shows Share parents and their children taking part in puppet-making workshops. The puppets were then used to make decorations and to tell stories which had been written by the children.



Active parents in Kirklees!

Mums at Hyrstmount Junior School in Batley, West Yorkshire, have a very active KS2 Share group. They organised a netball match between staff and themselves and used the money gained from sponsorship to take the Share children out to McDonald's for lunch and to buy them a selection of reference books. The books were then presented, along with certificates, in assembly, to celebrate Share in the school. All of the mums involved are Muslim and, for some of them, English is their second language. Encouragingly, all of the Share parents will gain at least one unit of accreditation this year and they are now coming into school to take part in the 'Better Readers' scheme.

Share at Tor Yr Ywen, Cardiff

Parents at the Ton Yr Ywen Share group have been making flags with their children, so that the children could practise using a ruler to draw straight lines. They have also played number snap to encourage the children to develop faster addition skills, and have made a weather chart to help the children to learn how to record data.

Sara Evans, a Share parent, says: 'I am really enjoying taking part in the project. It has been lovely to get to know other parents and to find out *how* our children learn and what they do in school all day and don't tell us about! My son and I have both really enjoyed the time we have spent together on the activities and look forward to the coming weeks.'

This poem comes from Lucy Sultana, a parent at Ton Yr Ywen Primary School in Cardiff:

My thoughts on Share

*What is it about 'Share', I ask myself?
Well, it's much more fun than taking books off the shelf,
An insight into teaching, the hard work that goes in,
The endless spoiled copies that go in the bin,
I spend much more quality time with my son,
Going through the activities on a 'one to one',
An hour a week in class with Mrs Morgan;
When I was in school, I didn't have this much fun!
We arrange ourselves and all have a coffee;
Mrs Buchan makes cakes, be it cherry or toffee,
Doing drawing or gluing, it varies each time,
A wordsearch one week, the next a rhyme,
A sense of achievement, commitment and care,
Drives me on every week to make sure I'm there,
But the best thing of all, and this is true,
is when Ben says:
'Thanks for helping, Mum, I really love you.'*

Maths comes alive in Leeds

Robyn France's mum from St Michael's Primary School, Headingley, made a big floor game with her daughter to encourage her to apply her knowledge of shapes. Having laid out the game on the floor, she called out the names of particular shapes and Robyn ran and stood on the relevant card. This activity was such a success that Robyn's mum came into class during the Numeracy Hour and played it with small groups of children.



Share quality

Learning certificate

The Share quality learning certificate is designed to set out the minimum standards to be met by schools participating in the Share project and outlines the basics of a partnership between parents and teachers. It is free and is awarded for a three year period, on the recommendation of the LEA/EAZ.

How does our school get one?

The LEA/EAZ is responsible for applying for the certificate on behalf of your school and for awarding it to your school, complete with the Director of Education's signature; the LEA/EAZ will need to fill out an application form (for one school or group of schools) and will have to demonstrate good 'Share' practice at each school. If you think you deserve one, then 'badger' your LEA/EAZ to apply!



Riverside sHAre

Share was traditionally a school-led programme until 'A Fair Chance' was developed, in which the Share materials and methodology were applied to supporting foster carers and children in public care. Now, the Riverside Housing Association is developing Share in three schools in Leicester. The Share programme is open to all parents at the schools, with places reserved for the tenants. Two of the schools have already started Share and are running it very successfully. At Charnwood Primary School, eleven mums have joined the group. They meet weekly with Elizabeth Hassall, the Share teacher and Marisha Parma, who is NNEB trained and who works with the parents and helps with any language difficulties. Leicester College also provides support in some

of their sessions, to enable parents to put their portfolios together and gain accreditation. Elizabeth Hassall says that this group is still growing and will definitely continue next year. She lists the particular benefits so far:

- the parents have gained in confidence
- the children's confidence has also grown
- the parents are gaining a lot from the social interaction
- the parents have had the opportunity to develop their own talents – one has gained good IT skills, many are doing a literacy course at the school and several have discovered artistic talents they did not know they possessed.



Share mums having fun together making play-dough decorative tiles



Raheema with her mum, Rashida Mohammed, and the play-dough heart they made and decorated together



Family Learning Weekend

12-14 October 2001

Last year's Family Learning Weekend, organised by the Campaign for Learning, was a huge success and it is estimated that over 250,00 people took part. We hope that many Share families will take part this year, perhaps going to the local leisure centre together or playing a game at home.

Share schools can play a very important role in supporting family learning and encouraging all generations to share an activity together. You might like to invite parents and grandparents into school to join their children in the classroom to read a story together or join a Share picnic. If you would like some more information and ideas for activities, or publicity materials, please telephone 0117 966 7755.

Parents' Week

22-28 October 2001

'Listening to Parents' is the theme for this year's national Parents' Week, organised by the National Family and Parenting Institute (NFPI) and everyone is invited to take part. NFPI will be releasing the results of new research carried out with parents and will also be holding a mini-conference, looking at what makes for resilient families. Parentline Plus is planning to release research on callers to its helpline. The Race Equality Unit plans a focus on listening to parents from minority ethnic backgrounds. NFPI are also calling on all local and regional groups working with parents to participate and have produced a Parents' Week pack to give you ideas for activities and display materials.

If you would like to take part, please e-mail info@nfpi.org for a pack or register at the website: www.nfpi.org.uk

DIARY DATES

LEA/EAZ Network meeting

Focus: exploration of KS3 Share and methods of delivery

Venue: Charterhouse, Coventry

Date: Friday, 5 October 2001

Family Learning Weekend

Date: 12-14 October 2001

Approved Trainer Course

Venue: Technocentre, Coventry

Dates: Tuesday, 16 and Wednesday, 17 October 2001

Parents' Week

Date: 22-28 October 2001



Share badgers for sale!

In the photo above, Diane Parker from Barnsley holds a badger puppet. Badger puppets will soon be available for purchase through CEDC. The price will be approximately £4.00. Order forms will be available in September.

Left: The MAD group from Low Hall School, Wigan, at the Share conference in March



The Shared Learning Newsletter is primarily for teachers and parents taking part in Share. It is also useful for agencies or individuals who wish to find out more about how Share works in practice. We welcome articles, examples of activities, photographs and comments for inclusion in the newsletter. It is published termly and information needs to be sent in eight weeks before the end of term. We look forward to hearing from you!

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