

# Singing from the same song sheet

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## Key Points

- A bespoke vision of outstanding Parli teaching, outstanding Parli learning and 'perfect' Parli parenting
- Shared throughout the whole school community and integrated into every aspect of Parli life

## Purpose

### **What were your reasons for doing this development work?**

The overarching aim of this initiative is reflected in the first of the G4G Eight Pillars of Greatness: 'Shared Vision, Values, Culture and Ethos'. In terms of tailoring this to the Parli context, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) focused on three objectives:

- To explore, debate and negotiate what outstanding Parli pedagogy looks like, sounds like and feels like.
- To create a vision of outstanding Parli learning, outstanding Parli teaching and 'perfect' Parli parenting, sharing this vision throughout the school community.
- To integrate this bespoke vision into all aspects of school improvement.

The 'Outstanding' Ofsted report in November 2010, recognised the school's many achievements and its self-awareness. In response to the report, Parliament Hill School acknowledged that, to provide a world class education for all 'Parli Girls', structures and systems to share the vision and outstanding practice needed to be embedded. The challenge for the Senior Leadership Team was to create a highly ambitious and innovative vision of world class pedagogy, which would generate excitement, inspire and capture the imagination of the whole school community.

In light of this, the School Development Plan (SDP) focussed on strengthening an outstanding pedagogy, particularly collaborative learning, developing a growth mind set, exceptional challenge for Gifted and Talented students, and the explicit teaching of literacy.

### **Who were the identified target learners?**

All pupils

### **What were your success criteria?**

The strategic intentions of Parli are embodied in the school aims: to create a school

where:

- All girls belong and where every girl is nurtured, empowered and succeeds;
- Everyone enjoys learning and is creative – trying new things, finding solutions, embracing their responsibilities;
- Relationships are positive, respectful and everyone does their best;
- We are regarded as an outstanding school by our community and when judged by formal external measures.

### **What did you do? (What success criteria did you use?)**

Two new deputies arrived in January 2012, providing an excellent opportunity to look at learning and teaching with fresh eyes. Formal quality assurance processes for the preceding year evidenced over a third outstanding lessons, providing a strong foundation and pockets of exceptional practice which kindled an optimism about further school improvement to progress from good to outstanding overall for learning and teaching. How was this practice to be shared with all teaching staff over and above the school CPD offer? And how would this seep into the bloodlines of the school community until more consistently outstanding lessons were the norm?

The characteristics that made our learners so special were their maturity, confidence, openness and creativity. How could we use these qualities to sustain excitement about learning? On the down side, some teachers lamented that students were too passive, gave up too easily in the face of challenge and were not self-managing collaborators. Again, these insights were helpful in envisioning the model of outstanding learning and teaching.

The project started with a draft vision of outstanding Parli learning and teaching shared at the annual SLT planning weekend. These two competency models were presented in the first person through speech bubbles surrounding a central image of students and of teachers. As such, they represented a declaration of individual commitment to outstanding learning and to teaching, as well as a celebration of it. It struck a chord with all members of the team, as it captured the spirit of the best in classroom practice. These were then used as the backbone of the new school development plan around which we framed key questions.

The next step was to share these models with middle leaders, students, governors and parents to help refine the competencies and ensure they blossomed in line with stakeholders' responses .

The final version of the [outstanding Parli teaching model](#) was disseminated to teaching staff in a variety of forums and used as a starting point for whole-school CPD days. It was also included in induction materials and CPD for new and beginning teachers along with a teacher version of outstanding Parli learning. For students, the outstanding [Parli learning model](#) was included in year 6 interview induction packs, student organisers and presented in year group assemblies in relation to learning and teaching priorities- collaborative learning, growth mindset, G & T provision and literacy. Both models were shared with parents and carers

through the Parent Forum and in the school newsletter, and feedback was sought. Once the [parenting model](#) was finalised, this was shared through the Parent Forum and a year 9 and 10 parents' meeting about GCSE expectations.

*See attachments below for the the three models.*

**What specific teaching resources did you use?**

## Outcomes and Impact

**What has been the impact on pupil learning and teaching?**

Teachers who were new to Parliament Hill School found the Outstanding Parli Learning and the Outstanding Parli Teaching models particularly useful. "It allowed me to 'tune in' with the school ethos, which developed a sense of community and consistency throughout the school." Mark Fowle (History NQT)

Team Leaders reported finding the models "ambitious", "easy to digest" and "motivational", clarifying the skills they need to develop in their teams when planning professional development. They particularly welcome the fact that the models are based on research into best practice and focus on relationships and expectations. When working with visitors, departments have used the models to convey the Parli ethos succinctly and visitors reported finding them to be accessible, innovative and inspiring. Many teachers and Team Leaders used the models when planning for lesson observations or when feeding back to colleagues on lessons observed as a coaching tool. "They clearly outline what is expected from both the teacher and student. Having the 'criteria' visible in the classroom allows me to refer to it directly in lesson ..." Zoe Thorpe (PE and Dance teacher)

Evidence from Learner Observation Fortnight highlighted the impact on increased collaborative learning with more structured opportunities to develop oracy skills and being more resilient in the face of setbacks. Feedback was noticeably more diagnostic and students reported greater clarity about their next learning steps. "All students are clear of exactly what they need to be doing in order to make as much progress as possible ...I refer to these when planning and evaluating my lessons." Alex Russell (Dance teacher)

The Senior Leadership Team benefited from a shared vision in line management meetings and the distillation of responsibility for developing consistently outstanding teaching. The models had been particularly useful when inducting new staff and when working with teachers who needed support to develop their practice.

Subject Mentors have used the models with trainees, who have reported that they are able to see how the Teachers' Standards are designed to support students' progress in the classroom, bringing the standards to life and accelerating their understanding of what they are aiming for in terms of learning and teaching. "The learner version ... allows me to reflect upon the skills I should be helping the

students to develop.” Dan Abbott (Science Teach First trainee)

The History Department have created a model of Great Historians, personalising the original models through deep discussion of the attributes they aim to develop in students in preparation for lifelong learning. This process is being replicated in other subject areas.

A semi-structured focus group with a small group of Year 9 students revealed that they liked the ‘Perfect’ Parli Parent. They were able to give examples of parents praising them for the effort they made and were grateful for this because, “Sometimes you don’t get the results that you want”. They found the models “inspiring” and a useful learning tool: “It shows me how I can improve myself, and my learning”.

For progress review, it was adapted for use with students to self-review as part of a preparatory homework in years 7 to 11. “This is the first time I’ve been asked to think about the way I learn and how to improve on that. It made me realise what I was doing well and gave me time to think of the few things I needed to get better at.” (Year 8 student)

### **The impact on Parents and Carers**

Feedback from parents and carers suggests that they appreciated and valued being involved in prioritising the attributes of the ‘Perfect’ Parli Parent: “the discussion went to the heart of learning and how children learn best and what motivates them ... it is very impressive to talk about the personal challenges that children face or indeed anyone in the learning process. I am sure that many parents will be touched by this”. (Year 8 parent)

The G & T Team used the models when drawing up Individual Learning Plans with exceptionally able students, finding them an excellent resource for discussing growth mindset and the need for risk-taking and resilience. Parents reported this had been very helpful in supporting their daughters to embrace opportunities to take on new challenges.

### **Evidence of impact on pupil learning and teaching/leadership**