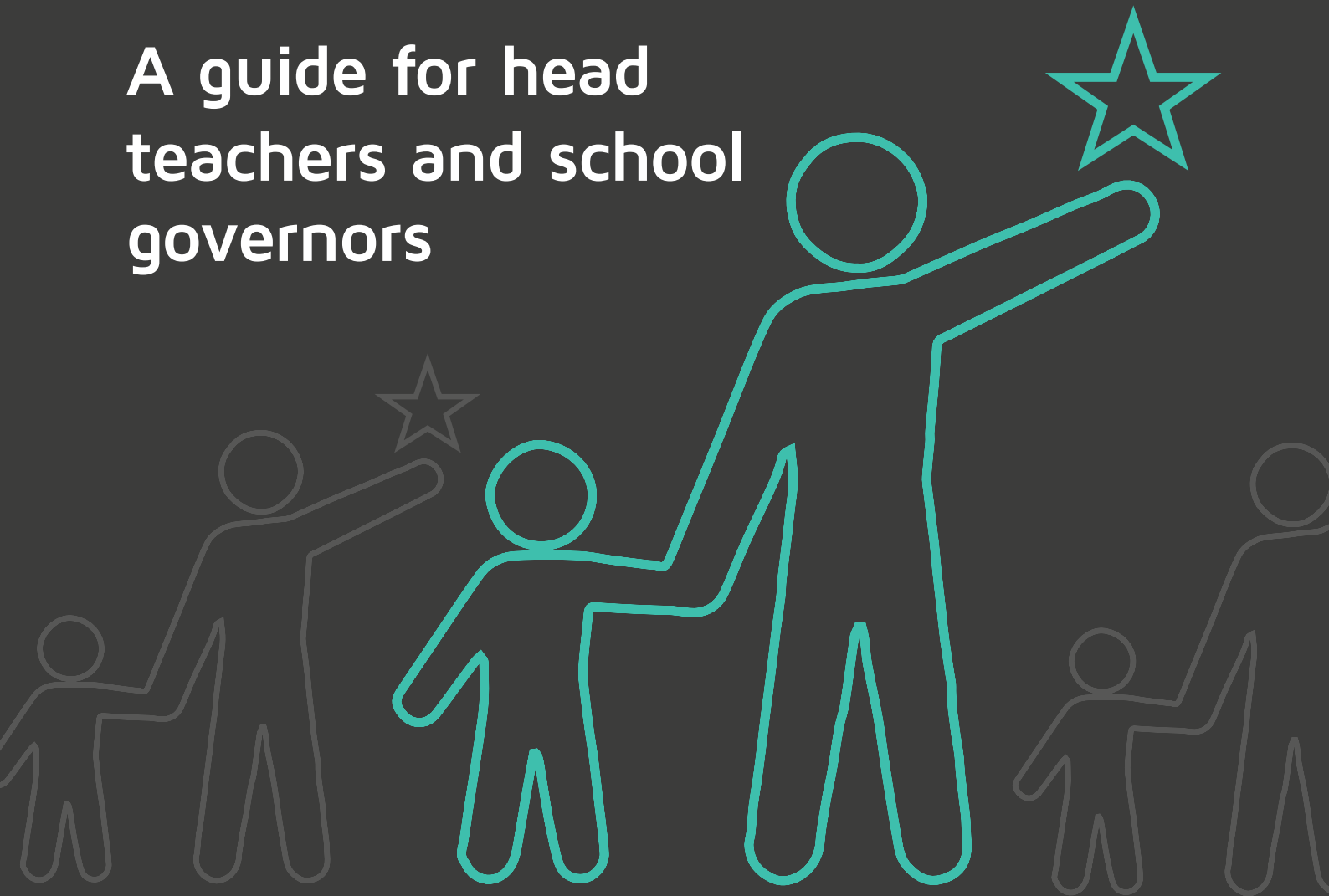


Raising pupil attainment through Family Learning

A guide for head
teachers and school
governors



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INTRODUCTION

This guide is for head teachers and school governors to help them invest their Pupil Premium funding in Family Learning programmes. The Pupil Premium is additional funding for schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers.

Family Learning is a pedagogical approach that refers to any learning activity that involves both children and adult family members, where learning outcomes are intended for both, and that contributes to a culture of learning in the family¹. Family Learning is a highly effective way to raise aspirations, increase parental involvement in their child's learning, improve outcomes and close the attainment gap. It provides a simple solution that enables schools to have a positive influence on the home learning environment.

This guide provides evidence of the impact of Family Learning on a range of measures for disadvantaged pupils and their families. It includes the information that you need to invest your Pupil Premium funding into provision which is effective at tackling disadvantage and improving outcomes for children.

This guide was developed by the Learning and Work Institute (L&W). We are an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. For more information about L&W's work Family Learning, please contact Joyce Black at joyce.black@learningandwork.org.uk

L&W would like to thank Robin Hood Primary School and Campaign for Learning for their contributions to the development of this guide.

¹ NIACE (2013) Family Learning Works: The Inquiry into Family Learning.



WHAT IS FAMILY LEARNING?

Family Learning is a pedagogical approach that refers to any learning activity that involves both children and adult family members, where learning outcomes are intended for both, and that contributes to a culture of learning in the family².

A range of different models exist which can be classed as Family Learning, indeed the flexibility of Family Learning means that it can be adapted to suit context and attendees. However, there are key points that usually are present, including:

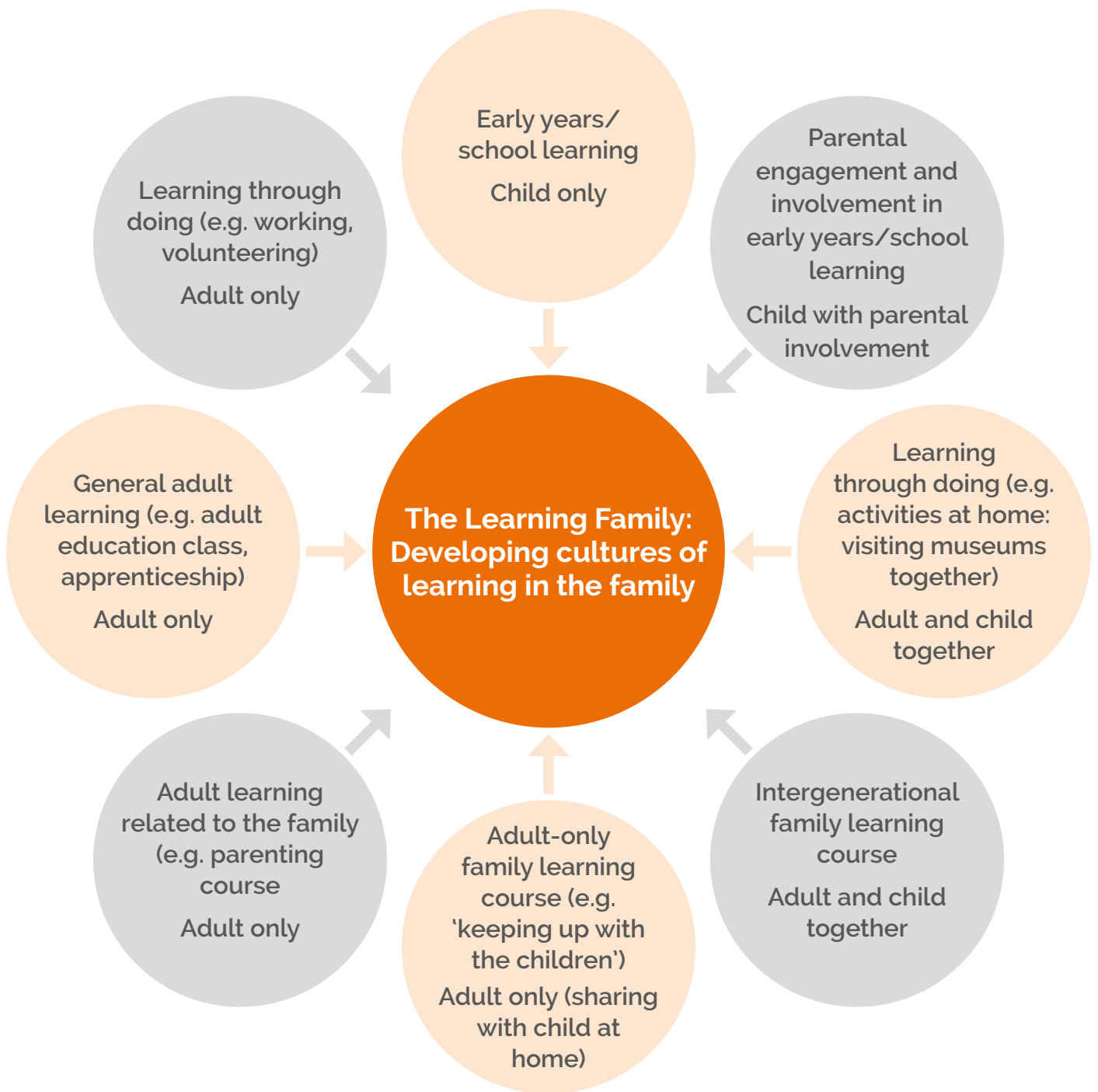
- Good or Outstanding teaching;
- Including the whole family and involving them in some or all of the sessions;
- Developing clear learning outcomes, for all involved, at the planning stage;
- Including communication and language as a key component;
- Workshop style learning;
- Enrichment visits or activities; and
- Opportunities to share and revisit learning.

The following model describes the different kinds of activity that Family Learning can entail and that contribute to the development of a culture of learning within the family³:



² NIACE (2013) Family Learning Works: The Inquiry into Family Learning.

³ Model taken from NIACE (2013) Family Learning Works: The Inquiry into Family Learning.



WHAT IS PUPIL PREMIUM?

Pupil Premium is additional funding for schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers⁴. It was designed to ensure that funding to tackle disadvantage reaches the pupils who need it most. The funding is allocated to schools based on the numbers of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM), are looked after or have parents currently in the Armed Forces.

'Effective use of the Pupil Premium is at the core of the moral purpose of school leadership.' John Dunford, National Pupil Premium Champion⁵

The attainment gap between pupils from deprived backgrounds and their peers is well documented; after prior attainment, poverty is the single most important factor in predicting a child's future life chances, resulting in many children from disadvantaged backgrounds entering school already well behind their peers.

Currently, attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils are derived by comparing the percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard with the percentage of all other (non-disadvantaged) pupils achieving the expected standard. For 2015, the attainment gaps were communicated as percentage point differences in:

- Achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2.

The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged in 2015 was 16.1%

- Achieving at least 5 A*-C grades, including GCSE English and mathematics, for Key Stage 4.

The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged in 2015 was 27.4%

Schools are required to publish on their website how they are spending their Pupil Premium allocation to ensure it has impacts for these disadvantaged pupils.

How much is Pupil Premium worth to schools?

Schools receive Pupil Premium funding for each child registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years. The amount of funding varies depending on which school year a child is in. Schools also receive a set amount of funding for each pupil who has left local-authority care for one of the following reasons:

- adoption
- a special guardianship order
- a child arrangements order
- a residence order

For current Pupil Premium funding rates, please visit the [Education Funding Agency website](#).

⁴ See the Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation Pupil Premium Next Steps Review (July 2015). <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Pupil-Premium-Summit-Report-FINAL-EDIT.pdf>

⁵ Pupil Premium Summit, July 2015. <http://pupilpremiumsummit.com/>

WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS INVEST THEIR PUPIL PREMIUM IN FAMILY LEARNING?

Family Learning can and does result in a wide range of benefits, not only for children and families, but also for schools. Here are some of the key reasons that you should invest your Pupil Premium funding in Family Learning:



1. Family Learning helps to close the attainment gap

A comprehensive review of research on the impact of parental involvement showed that learning at home was the biggest single influence on the achievement of children aged 3 to 7⁶. Family Learning provides a simple solution that enables schools to have a positive influence on the home learning environment, which has been shown to have a huge impact on children's development.

*'Evidence has shown that Family Learning could increase the overall level of children's development by as much as 15 percentage points for those from disadvantaged groups.'*⁷

The evidence is particularly compelling for language and numeracy-focused Family Learning programmes. For example, Carpentieri et al.⁸ examined six meta-analyses of evidence on Family Literacy interventions and concluded that these interventions have a much stronger impact on children's literacy acquisition than other educational interventions.

The impact of Family Learning on children's attainment is long-term and sustainable, with research suggesting that it improves educational outcomes up to and including university⁹.

6 Desforges, C. (2003) The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review. London: DfES.

7 NIACE (2013) Family Learning Works: The Inquiry into Family Learning.

8 Carpentieri, J., Fairfax-Cholmeley, K., Litster, J., Vorhaus, J. (2011) Family literacy in Europe: using parental support initiatives to enhance early literacy development. London: NRDC, Institute of Education.

9 NRDC (2012) Family Learning: A review of the research literature.

2. Family Learning improves parental engagement in children's learning

Research shows that Family Learning is highly effective in improving parental engagement in their children's learning. For example, Swain et al.¹⁰ found that family literacy programmes improved parent-school relations and home-school partnerships. In addition, research suggests that parents who engage in Family Learning programmes are more confident to engage with teachers in schools and adopt the teaching strategies used in schools to support their children's learning¹¹. In turn, this has a positive impact on children's attainment¹².

By using the Pupil Premium to develop and run Family Learning programmes and engaging parents in learning alongside their child, you can give parents the confidence and self-belief they need to engage in their child's continuing learning journey. Moreover, it raises their aspirations for themselves and their children.

'A Family Learning programme is about developing parents' skills in supporting their child. It can be the first step in parents and carers returning to education and employment. To be better able to help their child get the most from a setting, parents may seek to improve their own skills or their understanding of their role as a parent. This involvement can lead to other learning – by

*awakening the adult's interest and developing their confidence in their ability to learn.*¹³

3. Family Learning raises the aspirations of children and families

There is a strong relationship between the aspirations of parents for their children and those of their children themselves. This is reflected in the patterns of those who have high and low aspirations¹⁴. Because parents who hold higher aspirations for their children tend to be those who believe they have the ability to help their children and also to be more involved in their children's schooling, Family Learning can have a hugely positive impact on the aspirations of children and their families.

4. Family Learning develops and improves pupil behaviour

Research carried out by Ofsted suggests that Family Learning can have a positive impact on children's behaviour in the classroom. They found that staff and parents reported that children's skills, behaviour and relationships with peers and teachers improved and they settled better in class. Teachers also felt that these children improved their communication skills, self-confidence, fine motor skills, and participation in group activities, reading, writing and numeracy¹⁵.

10 Swain, J., Cara, O., Vorhaus, J., and Litster J. (2015) The impact of family literacy programmes on children's literacy skills and the home literacy environment.

11 OFSTED (2009) Family Learning: An evaluation of the benefits of Family Learning for participants, their families and the wider community

12 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2012) The Role of aspiration, attitudes and behaviour in closing the educational attainment gap.

13 Pre-school Learning Alliance (2007) Family Learning.

14 Schoon, I. (2006). Risk and Resilience: Adaptations in Changing Times. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

15 Ofsted (2009) An evaluation of the benefits of Family Learning for participants, their families and the wider community.



5. Family Learning results in a huge range of benefits to schools

The benefits to individual schools will depend upon the type of programmes and interventions that are used and how they are embedded into whole school practice. Key benefits can include:

- Increased attendance at parents' evenings;
- A greater degree of parental willingness to support the school in many activities;
- Increased parental involvement in school life;
- Improved social cohesion through higher parental involvement in local community and school;

- Improved understanding amongst parents/ carers about how to manage children's behaviour;
- Increased parental responsibility; and
- Higher educational aspirations amongst parents/carers and their children.

All of these benefits will lead to improved attainment and outcomes for your school.

HOW CAN SCHOOLS INVEST PUPIL PREMIUM IN FAMILY LEARNING PROGRAMMES?

Over the next few pages there are some suggestions about the types of Family Learning activities you can run to achieve particular outcomes with your Pupil Premium funding. These include key performance indicators and case studies of organisations who have successfully used Family Learning to these outcomes.

Aim: Increasing parental engagement in learning

Strategies and activities

- Parent subject based workshops
- Practical workshops
- Homework projects
- Learner Reviews
- Enrichment visits
- Parents' Forum
- Extra-curricular activities
- Specific engagement of dads and male carers in Family Learning

Key Performance Indicators

- Positive impact on parental engagement with school
- Results in positive impact on attainment levels of children
- Increases school readiness
- Reduces non-attendance

Case study: Robin Hood Primary school

Located in Bestwood, Nottingham, staff at **Robin Hood Primary school** have established a community hub for local families within the school premises. The school works in partnership with further education colleges and Nottingham City Council Family Learning Service to deliver Family Learning provision, which is coordinated by the Parental Liaison Coordinator and the Family Support Worker. Community bases for learning within the school have become a one-stop shop where families are able to access a range of services.

Aim: Increasing literacy and numeracy skills of adults and children

Strategies and activities

- Literacy Workshops
- Open Classrooms e.g. during Phonics sessions / Maths lessons
- Promoting Parents as role models
- Family Book Club
- On Site crèche / child care provision
- Parent Numeracy Workshops
- Structuring adult learning courses around the school year and curriculum so that adult's learning correlates with their child's learning
- Use of parent 'ambassadors' to promote courses to other parents

Key Performance Indicators

- Results in positive impact on attainment levels of children
- Increases levels of school readiness
- Increased confidence of parents to share, exchange and receive information about their child.
- Parents are better able to support their child in learning activities and homework tasks
- Parents see school in a positive light

Case study: Sheffield City Council

Sheffield City Council Inclusion and Learning Service commissioned 'Every Sheffield Child Articulate and Literate (ESCAL)' – a communitywide strategy to deliver development of communication skills for children aged 0-11 years old. The aim of the strategy is to make 'literacy and language everyone's business'. The profile of talk was raised at community events and venues such as 'Voice Explosion' in a local theatre, 'Talking Movies' at Cineworld, podcasting with Hallam FM and a 'Mad Hatters Talk Picnic', which involved over 1000 children outside Sheffield Town Hall. The approach targeted disadvantaged communities with a 'Family Time' campaign, including packages such as: 'Family Time workshops', 'Talking Together', 'Family Chatter Bags' and the ESCAL 'Literacy in the Home Award'.

Aim: Developing and improving pupil behaviour

Strategies and activities

- Specific courses run for parents on parenting e. g. 1, 2, 3 Magic
- Stay & Play Sessions
- Communicating regularly with parents – clear expectations of what is expected of their child whilst in school
- Family/School Agreement
- A welcoming, open and engaging environment supports parents to share their concerns and feel supported.
- Working with Children's Centre's
- Involving external agencies and professionals in the offer to parents.

Key Performance Indicators

- Much improved behaviour in the classroom and in routine school activities
- Rapid progress in school subjects.
- Higher levels of attendance
- Greater concentration and improved attention span in classes

Case study: Rotherham – ABC Family Learners

ABC Family Learners are private providers who have been delivering Family and Adult Learning in South Yorkshire for over 15 years. They work alongside Local Authorities, Schools, Libraries, Community groups, Faith groups etc. Their programmes have been highly praised by Ofsted Inspectors and they are regularly recommended by their clients (including schools, learning providers, parents/carers, families and children.) They are particularly effective at improving the literacy and numeracy skills of children and their families.

Aim: Raising aspirations of families and school community

Strategies and activities

- Strategies and activities
- Challenging stereotypes: Gender, Ethnicity, Age
- Building a Learning Community
- Events to raise aspiration e.g. careers day
- Hosting family days in school
- Partnerships with local businesses
- SEAL programmes
- Accessible information, resources
- Extra-curricular opportunities
- Use of peers as role models and explicit reference to role models

Key Performance Indicators

- Positive impact on parental engagement with school
- Positive impact on attainment levels of children
- Increases aspiration of parents for their children and themselves
- Reduces non-attendance

Case study: Monkton Priory School

Located in Monkton, Pembroke, Wales, **Monkton Priory School** employs a Launch Adult Learning Coordinator who organises and develops the adult and Family Learning provision at the school. The school works in collaboration with 'Learning Pembrokeshire' to offer Family Learning as well as with Communities 1st and Trinity St. David's University to offer accredited adult learning. The courses on offer include basic skills, IT, GSCE maths and English, CSCS and Higher Education programmes.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Campaign for Learning

<http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/cfl/index.asp>

Learning and Work Institute (L&W)

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/familylearning>

Learning Unlimited

<http://www.learningunlimited.co/resources/downloads>

National Family Learning Network

<http://www.familylearningnetwork.com/>

New Models for Family Numeracy

<http://www.family-numeracy.org.uk/>

Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) Group

<http://www.real-online.group.shef.ac.uk/index.html>





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