

## Case Study: Parent-friendly reception area and support services (King Edward VI School, Morpeth)

The King Edward VI School, Morpeth is a high school which has Arts, Technology and Leading Edge status. We educate over 1400 students from years 9-13 and have a thriving sixth form of over 400 students. We pride ourselves on being a fully inclusive and truly comprehensive school built on traditional principles and are one of the top ranking schools in the north-east of England for academic achievement.

### What are we doing and why?

Our parent body is incredibly diverse. Some families come from rural areas and travel up to an hour and a half to reach our school.

Others live in the town where there are both pockets of real social deprivation and extreme wealth.

A one size fits all approach certainly is not appropriate at King Edward's, so we've really had to think about 'personalising' our provision for parents.

One major step forward was the setting up of our Student and Parent Support Area, designed as a 'one stop shop' for students and parents.

This enabled the school administration and visitors' entrance to run smoothly and efficiently. At the other end of school a personalised service is provided for parents, separate from other visitors.

The main features of the area include:

- Very good disability access and a low-level access point with glazed panel
- Immediate access to our home-school link worker and attendance officer
- A plasma screen which projects key messages for the day and welcomes visitors
- A larger meeting room with access to refreshments



Outside the Student and Parent Support Area, we have created a "Parents Matter" notice board. This signposts parents/carers to Extended Services provision and useful websites, but also tells them how much they matter and how they can get involved in their child's learning. Latest mailshots or letters to parents are also displayed and a comfortable seating area has been created for parents whilst they wait.



## What has happened as a result?

- The impact on parents has been profound: they now know where to come to drop things off for their child, or to pick up, or if they have an issue they need to discuss or even just to report attendance. They feel more comfortable about visiting the school and know key staff
- Comments from feedback questionnaires have included:
  - "Good lines of communication, student support area excellent"
  - "Excellent pastoral care, particularly student and parents support area"
- In terms of inclusion, care, guidance and support our knowledge of each of our families is much more 'joined up' as all our dealings with parents and students goes through this one area and year leaders are based right next door
- Through LPPA we have also introduced a parental involvement tracking systems, parents attendance at events (Parents' Evenings, Inductions Evenings) matters and now from this office, we can see correlations between students' attendance and parents' attendance at school events, enabling us to identify just which families we need to try harder to engage



### TOP TIP



Make sure those who staff the area are carefully selected and trained and get to know parents on first-name terms