

School earns praise for encouraging parents to work with children

TEACHING MUMS AND DADS HOW TO TEACH

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SWINDON Academy has been hailed as an example to other schools on how it teaches mums and dads.

Ofsted looked at how parents are encouraged to engage with their children's learning at the secondary school.

The education watchdog plans to use the school as an example of best practice.

Vice principal Rose Codling said: "All parents want their children to do well at school and succeed. However, many of our parents tell me that they simply don't know where to start and that things have changed since they were at school."

To solve the problem the school runs Family Learning classes every Wednesday afternoon when parents take part in a lesson and then teach their children afterwards.

The classes, which have included Bollywood dancing, pilates, and helping with homework, aim to encourage parents to help teach youngsters at home. Parents are



FAMILY FUN Alison Price with her son Jamie, four, learning together at Swindon Academy
Picture: STUART HARRISON Ref: 215363-31

even on a waiting list to take part in an oversubscribed class about art through mosaics.

"It is about engaging parents and

getting them back into school to support their children," said Ms Codling.

"For us the important thing is

parents are developing the learning conversation with children. It opens things up so they can continue that in the evenings at home."

Ofsted's Department of Good Practice visited last Wednesday and studied how the Academy gets parents involved.

"The Ofsted inspector was very impressed with the family engagement work at the Academy and took photographs and documentation to use in case studies," said Ms Codling.

"Ofsted recognises what we are doing.

"We were asked if they could come along to our family learning workshops to see what was happening and talk to parents, carers and children."

The Academy also runs classes for parents so they can develop their own skills.

Called Learn For Yourself, the classes teach 15 adults about literacy, numeracy and writing CVs every Monday morning.

Parents can also come along to a weekly Tuesday coffee morning. There are plans to expand the number of classes offered.