

# What have parents got to do with education?

## Looking at: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools System

### A new white paper on education

June 2009

The church has always taught that parents are the first teachers of their children, in the faith as in everything. Families, the church also teaches are 'schools of love'.

It is good news then when the government, is at last starting to recognise the value of supporting family life.

It has done this most recently in the newly published white paper on Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools System.

The key points for parents to note are:

#### The Parent Guarantee

2.35 Parents know their children better than anyone else and want the best for them. They are also the single biggest influence on their children's development

We want mother, father and other carers to be made welcome by schools and to be engaged in their children's learning and wider development

We want them to be given the information, support and opportunities they need so they can support their children to do the best they possibly can

2.36 As schools with extended services have shown, offering parents a range of support services can...raise aspirations and improve the life chances of the whole Family Life Ministry

2.38 Parents value the support they get from other parents

The new Parent Guarantee will ensure that, among other things, parents will have access to a range of extended services by 2010 including information and support on **parenting skills** and advice on parenting issues.

Also, schools will be expected to work in partnership with other agencies (as well as parents) because no school can do it alone.

As Paul Jordan, Head Teacher at Thames View Infants School, said on p38 of the white paper "Having a positive relationship with parents is vital to a child's success. To us engaging parents is not a bolt on, it is the best and braces of our approach"

#### FLM COMMENT:

All the above is facilitated by the Family Caring Trust (FCT) Programmes that our Parenting Project is dedicated to training people to run in schools parishes and community groups.

FCT programmes offer parent sharing gives a valuable sense of support from other parents and reassurance about themselves

They also give good ideas to take away and try at home

The programmes give lots of opportunity to practice new skills like saying no or problem solving

By being run through schools it can begin to break down barriers and build better relationships between parents and schools

By being run through parishes it can build relationships and support parents in passing on the faith, particularly but not only, in sacramental preparation.

In this way we cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ on earth, the Church.