A partner primary school of the University of Worcester is the first in the County to become a Centre of Excellence for Inclusive Practice.

Pitmaston Primary School underwent a stringent audit from the Inclusion Quality Mark to achieve the award in June 2013 and more recently the Centre of Excellence status in July 2014, and is now working towards becoming a Flagship school under the scheme. There are just 52 Centres of Excellence in the Country, which represent some of the best schools for embedding inclusive practice. Inclusive practice ensures that all learners achieve and reach their full potential through equal access and opportunities.

Rachel Barrell, Course Leader for the University’s Primary Initial Teacher Education programme, who is also Chair of Governors at the school, said: “This is a fantastic achievement for Pitmaston and is a reflection of all of their hard work to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all children to learn.

“As a university we have supported the school and have worked closely with them to develop our own teacher training programmes. We are delighted that our trainees have access to the wealth of knowledge and experience of the staff at Pitmaston Primary School. This year, the school has employed five of our Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), which shows the excellent partnership working between us.”

The school’s Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), Emily Powell, is also a graduate of the University after undertaking the National Award in Special Educational Needs.

Emily explained: “When we formed our new Inclusion Team three years ago we changed the accountability for the progress of pupils with additional needs from the SENCo to the class teacher. This links with the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE July, 2014) and is embedded in our school practice and supported our accreditation for the Centre of Excellence.”

Kate Wilcock, Deputy Head at Pitmaston Primary School, said: “We are really pleased to have received recognition for the work that we do. Undergoing the audit was a really useful exercise for us to develop and strengthen the many initiatives we already have in place to support pupils with additional needs.

“We are now working with other schools to share best practice and support each other as a lead school. Parents have confidence in the school and its staff and feel consulted at every stage of their children’s development.”

The University of Worcester is an approved training centre for the National Award SENCo (NASC), a statutory award for newly-appointed SENCos, and embeds SEN training across all of its primary courses.