

REPORT FOR SCHOOLS FORUM

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| Date of Meeting: | 26 th June 2013 |
| SUBJECT: | Collaborative Partnerships |
| Report by: | Tim Culpin |
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| Is the report confidential? | No |

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| 1. | Purpose |
| | The purpose of this report is to provide the Schools Forum with information regarding the Local Authority's work with collaborative partnerships. |
| 2. | Introduction and Feedback |
| | <p>There are 139 schools involved in 32 formal collaborative partnerships. There are also 37 small schools not working within a formal partnership. Some of these would like to work in partnerships, but have not yet found an appropriate group. We have supported a few in making contact with other schools and potential partnership working is in the early stages of development. Many larger schools are now joining partnerships.</p> <p>Feedback from questionnaires to Collaborative Partnerships 62% of partnerships responded to a survey. A multiple choice question showed that 96% of those surveyed said that collaboration activities have made a positive difference in their schools.</p> <p>As well as the multiple choice questions, respondents added comments of their own to many of the questions. These helped to provide more detail about the approach schools are taking. Where there were further priorities mentioned, many of these included enrichment activities and a widening of learning opportunities within a creative curriculum.</p> <p>Visits to other schools have also featured in many of the activities. Some of these are for staff to engage in CPD activities, but others have included children, so they can see how other schools operate and as a preliminary to further projects involving more than one school.</p> <p>A number of other key activities were noted, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer observations • Curriculum development • Governor support • Joint working on School Self Evaluation • Joint training • Joint activities bringing children together |

Comments from OfSTED reports

Partnership working has been mentioned in an increasing number of recent reports:

‘School leaders have made very good use of the skills and expertise of staff in their partner schools. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. The quality of leadership and management has improved at all levels.’

(Wrangle Primary School)

‘Partnership work between the three schools is a strength. For example, leaders make effective use of the strongest teaching; in particular, outstanding teaching is used well to model excellent practice for others.’

(Sutton Bridge Westmere Community Primary School)

‘The headteacher has established very productive partnerships with a group of local schools who use funding from the Local Authority well to provide joint, cost-effective training based upon common needs. This has benefited this school particularly in the use of computers for learning.’

(Hemswell Cliff Primary School)

One in particular cited partnership working as a way to promote school improvement and formed part of recommended actions. HMI recommend that further action is taken to ‘make rapid progress in building collaborative links with other nearby schools to support leadership, management and the development of teaching and learning.’

Comments/interest from other parties

Professor David Hargreaves commented (as a result of the Leadership Conference and his subsequent master classes) that Lincolnshire schools are further ahead in this type of work than other areas of the country.

Professor Steven Higgins is supportive of the work in one of our partnerships (focused on the use of digital technology to improve outcomes for pupils) and has visited the partnership to explore and share good practice.

CfBT action research project

A bid for £38,000 has been approved for the project. The aim of the research is to investigate the most effective ways for small rural primary schools to work together in order to improve provision and raise standards.

Through an exploration and evaluation of those conditions and leadership which are successful in improving outcomes for pupils, we aim:

- To identify successful approaches to collaboration likely to have a positive impact on pupil achievement
- To identify barriers to successful collaborative models.

Professor Robert Hill will be leading this research in July.

Schools Working Together Conference

Representatives from at least 12 of our schools will be active participants in the conference presentations and workshops. They will be sharing projects at different stages of development.

Comments from schools

‘The three schools value this collaboration highly, so we would assume the Governors of the retiring head’s school will want to appoint someone who shares their views on this.’

'We did everything before but with the collaboration we are able to share successes and ideas enabling a richer pool of resources.'

'Obviously CPD was taking place but not in the same format. We are gaining from sharing strengths of staff between schools and buying in external support together.'

'One of the heads of our collaborative partnership is leaving the school, however, we shall endeavor to bring the new head up to speed with our work so far and the school has ensured us of their continued commitment to the partnership.'

'We are further developing opportunities for CPD and we are looking at bringing the children together from each school to learn together. We were already working in a good partnership with other schools so we are seeking to develop this further in a tighter, smaller group.'

'Curriculum Change Group has been set up across the partnership which is based on an inquiry group model (NCSL - Networked Learning Communities) with research and feedback to develop individual school's curricular (joint approach but individual school outcome).'

'We obviously had CPD before in our individual schools but now having shared CPD opportunities means we can follow through across the partnership. Sharing the journey makes it both more manageable and also enhances our expertise base.'

'We have set up a SENDCo group, teaching assistant support group and admin/purchasing group.'

'The discussions, visits and implementation of new ideas to develop the curriculum are working well and was not something we had been able to do before.'

'There's a great deal of shared learning, shared resources and training, shared working. We are also looking at liaising with a secondary school to provide shared learning for Gifted and Talented children from each school.'

'We have considered developing cluster meetings for different year groups of teachers. We have also got teachers from one school leading training for the other schools. We have also planned a Gifted & Talented activity day for the Year 6 pupils across our schools.'

'Shared Governor training has improved their understanding of monitoring and evaluation. The learning network has extended – recently where TAs got together to share good practice and are now developing links throughout the schools.'

'Work across the collaboration targeted satisfactory teaching over a 10 week programme with the aim of moving it to good and outstanding. The impact in my school was significant - improved teaching, accelerated pupil progress and career enhancement.'

'We have shared training for staff and governors planned, shared themed days for the children different ones for each year group, heads are working closely together supporting and evaluating all our work in school.'

'We have started pupil collaborative activities, for example, Level 6 children working together across the 5 schools.'

'Our Governing Bodies are learning from and supporting each other.'

'Shared governor training leading to a better understanding and more effective monitoring and evaluation.'

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| | <p>‘Moderation meetings between schools have given teachers greater confidence in their leveling.’</p> <p>‘We have only just begun as a partnership but already we are looking at shared events which will be supporting all schools in our collective goals.’</p> <p>‘The writing moderation has impacted upon the NQTs in my school and surety of the validity of their judgments, so enabling them to assess for learning with more confidence. The classes who have been through the video process so far have found it enlightening and to have a direct and immediate impact on the quality of teaching. The impact of introducing our children via the school council across the schools, has improved the school voice and contribution to improving our school.’</p> |
| 2. | <p>Summary</p> |
| | <p>The text above provides information on the Collaborative Partnerships initiative, and gives examples of the positive feedback that has been given.</p> <p>Further information can be obtained from Tim Culpin – tculpin@cfbt.com.</p> |