

Investing in staff “enriches pupils and other colleagues”

Bay House School and Sixth Form recognised that investing in both support and teaching staff through lead practitioner (LP) accreditation would have immeasurable impact on colleagues’ motivation and the feeling of being valued. The extra discretionary effort harnessed from colleagues has had a strong positive effect not just on the colleagues, but also on the teams that they work with and therefore on the children and community. This is because they see their sharing of best practice as a joy, and as part of their role as a professional, rather than ‘extra work’.

The school supported the cohort both as individuals and as a group. Each aspiring LP was assigned a senior link coach to meet with and discuss how their project and other aspects of their role were helping to provide good evidence for each of the standards. Each LP was also given a buddy from Cohort 1 to provide guidance and support. The projects were chosen based on the school improvement plan.

A half-termly support session focused on the leadership of learning, using coaching cards and previous exemplars to help the write up of each section.

The school gives the lead practitioners opportunities to share best practice and develop their coaching skills across the school and beyond. A Pedagoo was held in January 2016 and a second TeachMeet in June 2016. The aspiring lead practitioners also facilitated the teacher learning communities (TLCs) for the year, allowing opportunities to share with and develop colleagues from across the school (This is written up as an EFA case study.) Lead practitioners were trained as teaching and learning coaches for colleagues identified as needing additional informal support as their teaching was not yet ‘good’.

Participants describe the benefits

David Higginbottom, whole school leader for the LPA programme, says “it has allowed me to work with teachers from across Bay House and other schools within the region, to share, talk and get excited about teaching and learning ideas. Colleagues have commented on how effective and useful these ideas have been.”

His colleagues are equally positive.

- Teacher Jen Palmer says: “the thing I was most proud of was pushing myself out of my comfort zone and finding the confidence to stand up and deliver professional learning to a wide range of experienced colleagues at staff meetings, etc.”
- Support staff member Tracy Davis says, “I can share strategies with colleagues new to teaching and enable young people with additional needs to have the same opportunities as their peers to succeed in school.”
- Librarian Karen Sisk says: “since taking steps to improve the whole-school approach to information literacy, I have received more communication on this from colleagues than ever before. The skills required to find, select, and use information ethically are beginning to receive greater emphasis throughout the school.” Also, she says: the programme “really highlighted the numerous benefits of seeking positive and negative feedback generally – this is something I have maintained even after the process of accreditation.”
- Alternative provision staff member Kirsty Smillie says, “it allowed me to network with truly inspiring professionals across the country... to share and be given new ideas and techniques to improve my own teaching practice. Completing the accreditation made me research pedagogy extensively and question the most effective ways of teaching across a variety of settings, focusing on engaging disengaged learners in maths. Other schools are now implementing the scheme of work that I designed to engage lower ability students. I have also seen a love for learning grow in students who previously had no interest.”
- Assistant headteacher for professional learning Moira Duffy says: “if I was talking to another school about the LP accreditation programme, I’d say: ‘Just do it!’ Investing in and recognising our wonderful staff members has enriched our pupils and other colleagues. Colleagues ask me weekly when we will be advertising Cohort 3...”

Lead practitioners will continue to be personalised coaches for colleagues across the school. They are now leading on the development of teacher learning communities (TLCs) which will incorporate Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (TEEP) planning into developing quality lessons that challenge and support every learner, especially at KS3.

Finally, Bay House’s lead practitioners will continue to share best practice at its Pedagoos, TeachMeets and 15-minute weekly forum.