

# The journey is as important as the outcome

Shenley Academy, an 11-18 comprehensive in the suburbs of Birmingham, undertook the SSAT Lead Practitioner (LP) accreditation with a cohort of teaching and non-teaching staff. It was seen as a valuable professional development opportunity, particularly through developing leadership capacity in colleagues across all stages of their career. The accreditation would encourage staff to further develop their enthusiasm for teaching and learning, and would provide opportunities for networking with other professionals across the country.

The academy selected a cohort of LPs in autumn 2015: and each were allocated an accredited coach to support them. They attended training sessions delivered by SSAT to launch the LP accreditation and explain the process. After completing their self-assessments, they worked with the coaches to identify opportunities for their own development to reach the required standard of the LP accreditation. As a group they collaborated through Padlet, an online tool which promotes dialogue and reflection. And, supported by the coaches, and a further support session from SSAT, they reviewed each other's applications before submission.

The LPs all worked on projects derived from the academy improvement plan, and focused on improving outcomes for students. The LP projects included research and development on: challenge; engagement; assessment for learning – encouraging effort and demonstrating progress; assessment for learning – use of exams and assessments to improve outcomes; developing resilience – growth mindsets; behaviour for learning; developing memory and recall; and differentiation.

Each LP led their project within a learning community of cross curricular colleagues. They committed themselves to developing this area of teaching and learning and researched, planned and delivered regular training workshops for staff.



The main outcomes of the LP programme were the promotion of sharing good practice and encouraging quality dialogue on teaching and learning. Development of the LPs' leadership capacity was evidenced by one of them becoming a specialist leader of education (SLE). The impact of their projects is widely recognised, and the LPs are acknowledged to have played a part in the 10% rise of the academy's headline figure of 5A\*-CEM over the last year.

The cohort lead, assistant principal for staff development and training, Hannah Percival, says: "We're most proud of the quality of professional development LPs have provided to colleagues across the academy.

"The journey towards accreditation is as important as the final accreditation itself. It sets colleagues up well to further develop their role as leaders of teaching and learning across their school and beyond." And what is so important, she adds is "that everything is clearly linked to student outcomes."

"We have already secured our first cohort of aspiring LPs for this academic year."

She is keen to provide further opportunities for the LPs to work in other schools, as "this would allow them to transform and lead learning", and in fact in September 2016 Shenley Academy became a [Lead Practitioner Learning Centre](#). It will be coaching and training teaching and non-teaching professionals across the region and in their multi-academy trust as LPs, as well as launching a new cohort of LPs within the academy itself.

To find out more about SSAT Lead Practitioner accreditation and how it could support your school /academy, including cross federation/cluster approaches, see [www.ssatuk.co.uk/lp](http://www.ssatuk.co.uk/lp)