

Peptalk

Developing Successful leadership

Leading and Developing Pupil voice

Swale Rural Cluster Student Council

A genuine desire to hear Pupil Voice and use it to inform Leadership decisions has led to the formation of the Swale Rural Cluster Student Council, following the Dartford and Swanley Cluster's Model. Two representatives from each of the Cluster school's own councils are invited to attend the termly meetings, including Infant, Primary and Secondary Schools. The Council meet at the Faversham Guildhall and the entire meeting is chaired and run by the students themselves, a chance for them also to learn about leadership and develop their own leadership skills.

The first elected Chairs were George and Georgie from Lynsted and Norton Primary School. George said,

"I feel that being on the Council is very good because everyone gets the opportunity to discuss their problems and successes at their own school. We also get a feel of what it would be like to be in each other's schools. When we discuss problems we try to think of ways to make these problems better and we learn about the successful things from others that we could do in our own school. Georgie and I love being the Chair. It's really good fun and it's been cool to have been given the chance to lead children of our own age."

Attendance at the meetings is very good. Agenda's are a mixture of items set by the Council members themselves and issues that have arisen from Head Teacher meetings. This year there have been discussions around the quality of learning, the effective use of supply teachers, Fair Trade and how schools are working towards achieving Healthy School status. Recently the Police Community Officer for Faversham attended the meeting to talk about his role and answer questions raised.

Now that the Council is established and functioning well, it is hoped that where appropriate, pupils will be able to feed directly into the decision making process at Cluster as well as school level.

C.Dunn Headteacher, Davington Primary School

Cultural Insight into Successful Schools and Clusters

The strengths

- A strong sense of direction, purpose and community runs through the school.
- Commonly shared values and beliefs centre on the importance; of working as a team, with a core mission of helping to support and develop / grow all members of the school community.



- Collegiality is highly valued – there is a sense of great cohesion and humour within the team – "we're all working together to support each other".
- Strong formal and informal direction comes from the headteacher – the ethos starts in his/her office and runs through the building.
- A strong sense of achievement running through the schools and reflected in awards as well as personal reflections on success.
- A clear underlying commitment to raising pupil achievement from staff across the school.
- People come first – everyone can make a contribution and deserves control over their own destiny.
- Working together – learning from each other, sharing resources and ideas, investing in others.
- Warmth, Humour, Repartee, feet on the ground.
- Setting achievable goals and realistic expectations – incremental improvements.
- Focusing on the value added – holding hope for every child – every gain a victory.
- Creating opportunities to everyone – widening horizons – fighting injustice.
- Raising capability – helping people learn. Laying foundations for later success.
- A hunger for improvement – high hopes and expectations.
- Promoting excellence – pushing the boundaries of achievement.
- Creating a pleasant and collegial working environment.

Hay Group

Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job. That takes all of the good characteristics, like integrity, dedication of purpose, selflessness, knowledge, skill, implacability as well as determination not to accept failure.
(Admiral Arleigh, A. Burke)

The quality of leadership, more than any other single factor, determines the success or failure of an organisation.
(Fred Fiedler and Martin Cliemers – Improving Leadership Effectiveness)

When the effective leader is finished his work, the people say it happened naturally
(Lao Tse)



Leadership and the environment

Goals, Values and Concepts

Leaders exert influence on the environment via three types of actions:

- 1 The goals and performance standards they establish
- 2 The values they establish for the organisation
- 3 The business and people concepts they establish

Successful organisations have leaders who set high standards and goals across the entire spectrum.

Byssing Wood Primary School in Faversham and its involvement in the Trainee Headteacher Programme (Primary)

Programme Introduction

The Trainee Headteacher Programme seeks to develop a reservoir of potential headteachers who are equipped to work in schools facing challenging circumstances.

The programme involves a placement from September to April in such a school, working alongside a strong leadership team in order to gain first – hand experience of a challenging school context and the work of the headteacher.

The host headteacher is expected to provide mentoring and professional support to the trainee during the placement with the host school benefiting from the extra capacity created in the leadership team.

Programme Structure and Content

At the heart of the Trainee Headteacher Programme is the placement itself and the learning that occurs as a result of one-on-one mentoring and hands-on experience. The specifics vary according to the school context and changing priorities but a formal agreement is made early on between the host headteacher and trainee, facilitated by a programme tutor(who visits the Trainee on site at least twice during the year) on how the year ahead will be structured in terms of the development needs of the trainee and the school.

There are eight residential training sessions during the year which all trainees attend at the National College for School Leadership in Nottingham, starting at 5.30pm on Day 1 and finishing at 3pm on Day 2. Host Headteachers are invited to some of these.

The content of these sessions focuses largely on the national standards for headteachers and are also determined by group needs during the year. Trainees are expected to contribute online via the 'Talk2Learn' online community discussion forum to share their thoughts and news with other colleagues.

The Host Headteacher's perspective

Byssing Wood is a small school in the Rural Swale Cluster. The Senior Leadership Team is currently made up of myself, the SENCO and Senior Teacher. This project has provided the excellent opportunity to introduce an experienced practitioner into our Senior Leadership Team to create new ideas, skills and to build capacity.

One of the most beneficial things for myself has been the opportunity to spend quality time in professional dialogue, sharing my vision of the school and reflecting on my own practice and re-evaluating policies, procedures and practice already in place.

The chance to go to the National College for School Leadership and meet the other Host headteachers and discuss together our experiences in turning round a school in challenging circumstances and the strategies needed to maintain steady improvement, was valuable, and reaffirming.

The Trainee's Perspective

The idea of shadowing an experienced headteacher is an opportunity that should never be missed. The idea of doing this for four terms is a rare opportunity which I jumped at.

I split my time between shadowing and an agreed project. The project was to obtain the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the school in the short time that I was here. This task gave me the perfect opportunity to get to know the school and what ,makes it tick and to pick up on all the good practice that is taking place within the school.

Shadowing the Headteacher has been fascinating- and I feel that I have learnt a lot from her. She is supportive and helpful, taking time for me to question her and discuss issues and strategies for overcoming them. It is useful to see things from another point of view. In particular I think I have learnt to be more reflective and think about things before I do them or answer a query – as opposed to my 'natural' style of relying on gut reaction. This was one of my major development points highlighted by the Emotional Competencies Inventory undertaken at the beginning of the programme.

S. Lall P. Johnson

For further information about the project and to express an interest in participating, contact: cathie.aldis@kent.gov.uk (leadership adviser, ASK)

Leading the Foundation Stage

ASK Support

The Leading Early Years Team (LEYT)

Each cluster now has at least two members of the Leading Early Years Team representing schools and settings throughout Kent.

We have also included a group of Child Minders as a pilot and are hoping to extend this group following the outcomes of this.

Training for the team has been provided to ensure that they can give the best possible support to each cluster. So far this has included an Induction session; Implementing Reflective Practice; the Development of Physical Skills and an Inspiration Day, which reflected upon the work of Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) and Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEP) considering how adults can enter a child's world and support exciting, challenging learning. This training has been very stimulating and given the team opportunities to network and ensure that they have a shared understanding of effective practice.

what effect it has had on the learning environment. These portfolios will be displayed at Early Years training sessions and twilights.

The team not only demonstrate good practice throughout the county, but also enhance their own professional development and contribute to Early Years Projects and initiatives.

Every school and setting have now been given a matrix of the team with names and contact details for the Leading Early Years Team member within each cluster. All members of the team will welcome visits from Early Years colleagues

In order to arrange such a visit, telephone the LEYT directly to enable a focus and time for your visit to be agreed.

Helena Sadler



Foundation Stage Profile

The primary purpose of the Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) is to provide year 1 practitioners with information about each child's level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Judgements for the FSP need to be made through interpreting a range of evidence gained predominantly through observation of the child in self-initiated contexts.

The National Assessment Agency recommends that at least 80% of evidence be drawn from knowledge of the child through observations and anecdotal assessments, and no more than 20% of evidence from adult directed or focused assessments. Judgements should be made through assessing behaviour that is demonstrated consistently and independently in a range of situations and must demonstrate the child's confidence and ownership of the specific knowledge, skill or concept being assessed.

No supplementary assessments are required in addition to completing the FSP. Products that claim to enable practitioners to complete aspects of the FSP as the result of a one off response are not consistent with this advice and cannot be considered to be equivalent to the attainment of specific scale points.

A small amount of funding has been given to each member of the team to help them continue to enrich their learning environment and develop even more opportunities for the children within their settings.

Three Portfolios have been developed for East, West and Mid Kent demonstrating how this funding has been spent and

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The new Early Years Foundation Stage draws together guidance for all those working with children, from birth to the end of the reception year, in a way that is logical and consistent. It is a single framework bringing together the principles underpinning the Birth to Three Framework, the Foundation Stage, the day-care standards and the Key Elements of Effective practice (**KEEP**).

'The new framework underlines the indivisibility in the early years of care and learning, the central importance of play and the fundamental need for highly tailored 'personalised' learning opportunities. Out of these things will grow the kind of quality early years provision that we know gives all children the sort of inclusive, stimulating start in life that they deserve.' **Ruth Pimentel** – National Director, Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS will become statutory in September 2008, giving time for all practitioners to become familiar with the new format. From autumn 2007 there will be a variety of training for practitioners and managers in Kent schools and settings. Part of the national focus will be on developing a more qualified early years workforce via a variety of pathways.

Printed support materials are available in the form of the 'EYFS Briefing Pack' containing:

- Statutory framework document
- Practice guidance
- Poster
- CD-rom
- 'Principles into Practice' cards

The pack will be available for all practitioners working in schools and the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector.

The new framework will support effective practitioners to be more effective and will not mean any major changes to the way in which they already work. The emphasis will be on multi-disciplinary working to improve outcomes for all our children and ensuring high standards through the four overarching themes:

- The Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- The environment
- Learning and development

The new information can be downloaded at: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/

Hilary Quincey



Important Information for September 2007

In the light of the Rose Report Points 5 & 6 of Linking Sounds and Letters are to be altered. The information that we have at present is that the changes are to be:

- Point 5:** Hears and says sounds in words.
- Point 6:** Blends sounds in words.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is now available in readiness for implementation in September 2008. Training will take place related to it early in the autumn. Through this training replacement pages will be distributed for the Foundation Stage Profile Handbook. These pages will have exemplification materials for the changed points. Labels will also be provided for practitioners to put on the front of their file to ensure only updated documents are used.

From September 2008 it is expected that there will be a new Profile Hand-book. It will be in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage and will be called the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile'.

Judy Venner Early Years Adviser

Foundation Stage Kent Portfolio of Exemplification Materials for the Foundation Stage Profile



This portfolio is a collection of moderated examples that provide evidence of achievement towards specific profile points. We are grateful to the many teachers who have contributed to the compilation of this document.

It will arrive in school during the summer term. Please note that the document is the property of the school and should not be taken away by individuals. It is designed to take additional materials produced through moderation in Kent and for schools to add their own additional moderated examples.

This portfolio will be updated to meet the requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage** and the **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**.

Judy Venner Early Years Adviser

ASK Resources

Early Years website



The Early Years website can be accessed via the Advisory Service link on clusterweb from KNET or directly at <http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/askflat/early-home.html>

The home page gives general information regarding the responsibilities of the team and links to the following headings:

National and Local Initiatives

This currently contains information on the new Early Years Foundation Stage, ECERS, the DFES Public Service Agreement, Language Link and Gifted and Talented action research.

Continuing Professional Development

This links directly to information on all Early Years training and the Transformation Fund.

Publications

This section contains details of all our Kent Early Years publications such as 'Writing in the Air' and how to obtain them.

Resources

This contains a range of materials useful for supporting teaching and learning in Reception and Nursery classes including information on Foundation Stage Profile Moderation, planning and tracking progression in learning, self evaluation and the current Kent Record of Transfer. There are also links to other useful websites and Treasure Chest.

Contacts

This gives details of how to contact all personnel involved in supporting schools and maintained nurseries and the private, voluntary and independent sector.

The website is updated on a termly basis and provides a useful source of information regarding all areas supported by the Early Years and Childcare team.

Treasure Chest Resource Centre

Treasure Chest was established in 1999 and provides quality educational resources to support all aspects of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. There are over 1500 items ranging from nursery equipment to curriculum subject boxes.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are only £20.00 per year for pre-school and nursery schools and £50.00 per year for primary schools up to KS1 with no further cost for delivery or hire.

What we offer

- A delivery of three items/boxes from our colour catalogue every six weeks.
- Our experienced staff can offer advice on equipment suited to your setting's need and also advise how to use specialist equipment. The delivery co-ordinator for your area will be happy to support and give advice when required.
- The chance to regularly provide children with new learning experiences to stimulate their interest.
- Being able to try items before you decide to buy them.
- The opportunity to help us develop the service through evaluation and feedback.

- If your school or setting is having an open day or parent's evening etc, we will be happy to allow you to borrow more than the usual three items to support it for that length of time.
- Our delivery co-ordinators been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and have undertaken Child Protection training. They are familiar with Health & Safety issues and will always ensure that your staff and pupils are not affected by our delivery procedures. You will receive a copy of our own risk assessment of your school or setting, to ensure that all issues are dealt with from both angles.

If you are interested in joining Treasure Chest please contact your area co-ordinator.

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