

Building a successful team at Westmeads

Westmeads Infant school received an Ofsted survey inspection on 14th September 2006 to look at the way the school has developed an innovative curriculum. HMI noted that “As a result of the trust shown in them and their success, members of staff form a close-knit, confident and dedicated team who help and challenge each other.”

Sarah Leigh, Headteacher, reflects here on how this has been achieved in the 4 years since the school was placed in serious weakness.

- A shared vision is very important
- All staff, pupils, governors and children have been involved in the development of this vision or value statement
- The staff have ownership of the curriculum
- Coordinators have become stronger and more demanding of themselves and their expectations for their subject area
- Staff have respect for each other and their strengths and weaknesses
- Non-contact time is used to plan, discuss and work with other adults in parallel classes
- There are timetabled planning meetings
- A systematic planner for the year highlights up and coming things which need to be thought about and planned for
- Teachers support each other and teaching assistants
- Teaching assistants support class teachers
- All staff kept in the loop via daily messages and meetings
- INSET and professional development is always shared and disseminated to

- ensure whole school implementation
- Monitoring is used to develop school improvement and coordinators focus their monitoring on an area for development. They follow this up in a cyclical way to ensure colleagues are supported and impact can be monitored
- Where areas of concern may arise SMT support and set up plans to ensure the concern is dealt with quickly, but with care and consideration
- In order to continually strive for excellence and sustainability, regular staff meetings are planned throughout the year to allow staff to contribute to School Improvement Planning, key policies and the staff handbook
- Regular professional discussions take place relating to “teaching and learning” and about our shared vision as to what a good learner may look like, act like, think like and strive to be
- The staff are aware I would never ask anything of them that I would not be willing to do myself
- The staff are aware that I am prepared to take risks and manage any fall out and are therefore more inclined to suggest and or try out new things
- The staff are more like a large family and the emotional and social links are very strong
- The staff enjoy going out together and having a good time!



A baseline of management systems needs to be established in all schools. The schools in our outstanding project considered the following to be highly important:

A rigorous system for monitoring quality of teaching and learning

- Monitoring file to contain monitoring policy, timetable, lesson observation proformas, copies of lesson observations including areas for improvement and their impact, teaching and learning policy
- Copy of criteria used to judge teaching and learning
- Evidence trail to indicate how areas for improvement are monitored and followed up
- Up to date evidence of percentages seen of outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate teaching and learning
- Minutes of meetings where global staff feedback has been given
- Copies of lesson observations undertaken by external agencies e.g. PEP head

Evidence of robust systems for summative and formative assessment

- Evidence of a robust and informative system for analysing pupils' achievement, gap analysis, trend analysis, analysis of data relating to potentially underachieving groups, information on value added. The data needs to be understood by teachers and used to inform planning
- Assessment policy to include policy on marking and feedback
- Evidence of pupil involvement in self –assessment – development of pupil voice. Pupils and parents need to know their targets and how to achieve them.
- Evidence of planning formats used and information on how planning is

monitored and by whom

- Systems for identification of Additional Education Needs (AEN) and provision for meeting those needs

Leadership and management

- Information on roles and responsibilities
- Line management
- Job descriptions
- Rotas and timetables
- Directed time/PPA/TA allocation
- Performance management for teaching and support staff
- Information on CPD
- Staff handbook – including school vision and philosophy.

Completed SEF that has involved all stakeholders and information on timetable for updating

- Health and Safety
- Collective worship
- Sex education
- Child Protection
- Managing absence
- Disciplinary/Capability
- Pay



During the Ofsted inspection

- Headteachers need to proactively manage the inspection