

Commercial in Confidence



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



THE STANDARD
ASSESSMENT REPORT
FOR
LANGLEY SCHOOL

Assessor: Jackie Page

Date: 6th December 2007

West Midlands Quality Centre
7 Orchard Court, Binley Business Park, Harry Weston Road, Coventry, CV3 2TQ
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ASSESSMENT TYPE
POST RECOGNITION REVIEW

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

TITLE OF ORGANISATION	LANGLEY SCHOOL
MAIN ADDRESS	KINETON GREEN LANE OLTON SOLIHULL B92 7ER
TELEPHONE	0121 706 9771
MOST SENIOR PERSON	MRS DUFFY-CROSS HEADTEACHER
INVESTORS IN PEOPLE CONTACT	MRS R COTTON
NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN SCOPE	131
NUMBER OF SITES IN SCOPE	1
ON-SITE DATES	5 TH & 6 TH DECEMBER 2007
DATE OF FEEDBACK MEETING	6 TH DECEMBER 2007
WMQC PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	DENNIS HUMPHREYS
ASSESSMENT OUTCOME	STANDARD MET

INTRODUCTION

Langley School is located in Olton Solihull and provides education for 11-16 year olds. In 2002 the School became a Specialist College for the Performing Arts and has recently been awarded Training School Status and Language College Status. In October 2006 the school was graded as 'outstanding' in all categories by OfSTED

The Head Teacher, Mrs Duffy-Cross has developed a culture of open and honest communication and strives to enable staff at all levels to achieve their true potential whilst retaining focus on Work Life Balance, which is held in high priority at the School.

Since the last Review a number of changes have taken place including the introduction of the school's Professional Development Co-ordinator role which focuses not only on ensuring fair access to development for staff at all levels but also on producing a 'Training & Development History Record' for each member of staff which will focus on the nature of the training or development undertaken, the provider and how the same has been used. The Record will then be used to for a number of development aspects including; identification of training and development provided (fair access and equal opportunities, skills attained, efficient and effective Training Providers and enable a more effective evaluation process to be developed.

OBJECTIVES

The key objectives were to review the effectiveness of current processes and investigate /recommend improvement areas as appropriate.

1. Rationale of interview sample

Langley School has a staff of 131. During the assessment process a total of 24 people were interviewed: The Head Teacher, 4 Managers /Heads of, the Chair of Governors and 18 members of staff from a number of areas within the school. Staff chosen provided an overview of practice within as many areas of the school as possible and had varying length of service records. The Chair of Governors was interviewed by telephone.

2. Strengths and areas of good practice

- The Head Teacher conducts a 'Morning Briefing' each day in which she provides staff with an update of any events or changes which may affect how the school runs. Updates include good news items such as exams results, sport team results etc. The briefing includes details of any staff absences, any visitors on- site or any information that is deemed beneficial for staff to be aware of. Staff at all levels find this session very informative

and motivational. As one member of staff put it “the morning briefings set you up for the day”. Minutes of the Briefing are available the same morning for anyone that was unable to attend.

- The School utilises a number of methods of communication to ensure that staff at all levels remain fully apprised of developments and activities within the school including; the notice-board in the staff room, to which everyone has access, memos which are placed in individual trays, various meetings and the Morning Briefing.
- People at all levels feel valued and recognised for the contribution they make to the school. People spoken to were genuinely appreciative of the manner in which they are made to feel part of the team whether they are employed as cleaning staff or are part of the Senior Management Team. This feeling of ‘inclusiveness’ has been achieved by the friendly and approachable environment which has been created and nurtured by the Head and regularly involves a simple ‘thank you’ for a job well done.
- The Personal Development Co-ordinators role has helped to create centralised and co-ordinated processes which have enabled the school to start focusing on consistency of approach, evaluation of effectiveness and to start building a centralised database which will provide invaluable information for future learning and development activity.
- Whole school involvement in the School Improvement Plan (S.I.P) via the SIP Review Day and target setting consultations creates a strong level of ‘buy-in’ as well as helping to set direction and create SMART objectives for each area. During the SIP Review Day small groups of staff from all levels (Support Staff are paid to attend) review various aspects of the report using key themes and the input from staff at this Review are used to produce the final Draft which is then issued to the Board of Governors for their input/approval. Many of the staff spoken with during the Assessment appreciated the level of involvement they were encouraged to have and felt that the Review Day provided them with a greater understanding of the Aims of the school and how the role they undertook fitted into this ‘bigger picture’.

3. Potential for further development

The following suggestions relate to process refinement rather than the introduction of new processes. The School has introduced a number of new processes over the past 18 months and the following build onto the improvements to take a number of them to the next level:-

- Formalising the process for Mid-Term Performance Reviews across the School would create a more consistent approach and ensure that staff at all levels fully understand the process and how it will work for them.
- Consider looking at ways to adopt a more *consistent* approach to evaluating the impact of learning and development at all levels to assist in collating data

that can provide information on; the effectiveness of the Training Provider, the impact on the School (both pre and post learning) and provide a more detailed Cost Benefit Analysis. In addition to providing useful information for future use, having a structured and consistent evaluation process can demonstrate a greater interest in staff attendance at learning events and the learning outcomes of the same.

- Consider carrying out an evaluation of the Induction Process to establish the usefulness of the present content and structure to all levels. Conducting an Induction evaluation can provide valuable ideas for improvement and therefore ensure that the process achieves its objectives in the most effective and efficient way possible.

FINDINGS AGAINST THE STANDARD

PLAN

The School Improvement Plan is produced through a series of consultations with staff at all levels and the Board of Governors, and forms the basis for the discussions that take place to discuss individual and team Aims and Targets. By continual reference to the overall aims of the department staff are able to determine what training and development they need to undertake in order to achieve their targets. Requests for cost driven training are referred initially to the Senior Management Team who look at the School Improvement Plan, Individual Aims and Targets and previous training history.

The Personal Development Co-ordinator (PDC) position has responsibility for monitoring the budget assigned to training and development and in addition to ensuring that planned training will assist the School in achieving its published Aims and Targets, provides the School with an excellent opportunity to analyse the training and development that takes place and over time will prove to be a valuable source of evaluation data.

The School has recently assigned funding for additional clerical assistance for the PDC and work is currently being undertaken to produce a Training Profile for each member of staff which will record training undertaken and planned and will also look at how the learning has been used within the school.

A number of measurements are currently used to analyse the effectiveness of development that takes place within the School, including; staff turnover, impact on learning, school achievement results, parental and child satisfaction, and staff feedback.

The School makes excellent use of its experienced and enthusiastic staff by insisting that externally provided learning is cascaded within the School, usually during Staff meetings. The School is currently looking at accreditation for staff that carry-out the role of training others.

Training needs are discussed with staff during the Performance Review process and are based on agreed targets. All training is funnelled to the PDC via the Senior Management Team and the Head.

The following additional evidence was established during the Assessment discussions:-

- *“The Performance Reviews and the SIP Review Day outcomes are the most formal method I use to look at learning and development within the team. In addition to looking at our targets and the skills we will need within the team to meet them I also encourage staff to think about their own aspirations, any opportunities or projects they would like to be considered for etc. People are motivated when they achieve results but also when they feel they are actually also developing and progressing themselves” (1.4)*
- *“We have some very experienced people here and in addition to looking at external courses to rectify the training needs identified during discussions I think it is also important to consider what we can do internally, not just from a cost point of view but also because it provides a more tailored approach to training and allows others the opportunity to develop skills to; such as presentation skills, feedback skills and listening skills as an example” (1.4,2.2)*

People at all levels confirmed their involvement in the Review Day that takes place to look at the School Improvement Plan. Support Staff who are not scheduled to attend school on the Review Day are offered payment to attend, although not all do so. People were keen to point out that the school offered excellent training facilities and felt that the school was genuinely interested in people’s performance regardless of their position within the school. As one of the support staff put it *“we are all cogs in the big wheel of the school, some of us are smaller cogs than others but if one can’t turn neither can any of the others”*

Examples of feedback obtained from people included:-

- *“When we look at the SIP and decide on our targets it is relatively easy to then establish what training we will need either individually or in the team in terms of new skills or knowledge. I prefer my training to be carried out by someone with the experience in the school but that is personal choice. At the end of the day we have SMART objectives, we establish what skills we need to achieve them and we achieve them. It’s an efficient process and it works” (1.6,2.3)*
- *“Independent learning methods here have widened over the years. You are encouraged to share ideas with others; the lesson observations are a good medium for this. After all if you have tried something and found it works well it makes sense to pass that onto a colleague doesn’t it? There is no point in reinventing the wheel each time” (3.5)*

The School uses a number of methods to ensure that Managers have the skills needed to support and develop people. These methods include one to one coaching sessions with the Head Teacher, formal external training including the NPQH and the Leading from the Middle courses. Senior Managers coach Middle Managers to

achieve their potential and disseminate the learning they attain from external courses to get best value for the school. In addition to the Senior Management Team two Heads of Faculty are invited to attend the Senior Management Team Meetings on a rolling basis. The purpose of this is not only to nurture the culture of openness within the School but also provide development opportunities to middle management.

Numerous examples of feedback concerning the effectiveness of managers and the development provided to ensure this effectiveness included:-

- “The Head here provides excellent opportunities to develop. From my perspective some of the most fundamental skills an effective manager should possess are; the ability to listen, really listen to staff. A good manager is open to change and ideas, approachable and able to recognise individual motivators and then of course there are the obvious aspects of management, supporting people to carry-out their role effectively, facilitating their development and progression and providing them with feedback on how they are doing and how they can develop and grow even further” (4.2)
- “A good manager should be approachable, someone you can talk to easily and have a little laugh with. Someone you respect and who respects you and someone you can go to if you need help or support and know they will be there for you and not treat you as though you are stupid because you have had to ask. X is a brilliant manager he/she never ever makes you feel stupid and always says thank you at the end of the shift” (4.3,6.3)
- “A good Manager will use people’s strengths in the time-table; will provide support and encouragement, value people’s opinions and look at ways that people can develop further either through training or through the opportunities to try something new. A good manager will be a team player but will also know when to step in and make the final decision where necessary. I have to say all the managers here are great and I am not just saying that because this is an assessment! “ (4.3,5.3)

DO

The School culture is one of *‘getting the best out of their pupils through efficient and effective teaching methods and this is achieved by providing all staff with the highest level of support and training possible’*. Managers described the sense of satisfaction they achieve from seeing staff happy and motivated in their role which is reflected in the pupils within the school and the results they achieve. Managers were happy to discuss their own development opportunities and what impact the training they have received has had on the school and its performance as a whole. *“This school looks at both curriculum and personal needs and does all it can within the budgetary constraints to satisfy them. To give you an idea of the type of environment we have here I can tell you we have afterschool lessons for staff where other teachers share skills they have. These include German lessons and keep fit classes. People conduct them voluntarily and people attend them voluntarily and they are always well attended. I think that says a lot for the type of school we are”*

The recent OfSTED Report highlighted some particular aspects of outstanding achievement within the school and comments from the Report include:-

- 'The School sets great store by developing individual staff and pupils alike, who are given opportunities and training to succeed. This aspect has been recognised by Langley's imminent designation as a training school'
- 'There is a vibrant sense of team spirit.....'

People talked freely and naturally about the feedback and encouragement they receive throughout the school and from all levels. Several examples were obtained of how staff and managers felt the training and development they had received has enabled them to carry-out their role more effectively. Examples included:-

- *"I am a good teacher and am particularly proud of the fact that my approach to analysing and evaluating the impact of my lessons has lead us to such good results" (6.2,)*
- *"My line manager has delegated a number of tasks which I have now taken over completely. As well as providing me with the opportunity to learn new things it also means I can keep things ticking over during his/her absence"(5.3,6.2,7.3)*
- *"The teachers here provide feedback and a pat on the back. We work as a team, teachers and support staff and I think its really good that they let you know when something you have done has worked well or has been mentioned by a parent, it makes it feel as though you really do make a difference"(5.3.5.4,6.3)*
- *"The peer observation here is a two-way process not a pointing out faults session. We share ideas and you receive feedback on what is working well and what could be improved further. The good thing though is that you are not told how to improve you discuss possible ideas but ultimately you are given responsibility for deciding which way to go" (5.3,5.4,7.2,7.3)*
- *"The flow of information between levels here is excellent. There is none of this knowledge is power approach. The knowledge I have received from my manager and my colleagues has helped me enormously. I received help on looking at establishing the impact of my lessons on the pupils and I can say, hand on heart; it has really made a difference both for me and the pupils!" (5.3,6.2,8.2)*
- *"One of the best parts of the Morning Briefings is hearing about the achievements of others. We really are one big team here and hearing about a colleagues successes gives everyone a buzz" (5.4,6.3)*
- *"The Induction Process here includes coaching from your line manager and we were also given a formal talk which included talks from a number of different members of staff from around the school on different aspects, policies etc. I found that useful in being able to put a face to a name for future queries. Oh and we also have a Staff Handbook which is useful. You can look up things you are not sure of, a sort of quick reference book really" (8.3)*
- *"I try to help people to develop in a variety of ways by stretching themselves not just academically but personally. In addition to formal learning methods to provide key skills I like to look at how I can then provide people with the opportunity to put new skills and knowledge into practice and one of the easiest ways of achieving this is to ask them ' okay, so how do we put this into practice and make sure it works? They invariably come up with ideas either as an individual or as a result of discussing it with the rest of the team, and then it's a case of monitoring results and feeding back" (5.1,5.2,7.1,8.1)*

- *“I put forward one of my members of staff to attend a Governors meeting and provide a brief presentation on a recent event. The team helped with ideas and the next day she received feedback from both the Governors and the Head on a job well done. She gave the same presentation to the rest of the department on the Monday” (5.2,6.1,7.1)*

REVIEW

The School Improvement Plan, opportunities provided by Training College status, PDC role, Performance Management Policy and Staff Development Policy are all utilised to define the Schools approach to and plans for ongoing development of staff at all levels. Evaluation of the effectiveness of development is mainly gauged by the results attained by pupils and parent satisfaction. The data gathered via the PDC is now being used more frequently to evaluate individual performance and achievement and as the data gathered increases via the planned enhancements to the PDC role the School will have greater opportunity to evaluate its investment in this area.

During discussions a number of examples to support evaluation and progression were obtained, these include:-

- “A particularly effective approach we adopted recently was providing a lunchtime supervisor shadowing session with an external behavioural specialist. The feedback from staff on that was very good and during discussions with them on whether they thought the session had been of any benefit they all confirmed it had had a positive impact on their role” (9.4)
- “It is easy to measure the impact of recent training because it was learning new software. The measurement is that we can now perform a function that we could not perform before” (9.5)
- “One of the most effective changes that have been made, from my point of view, is the setting of objectives. Our objectives are much smarter now which makes it much easier to know what you are intended to achieve and how the impact can be measured” (5.3,10.3)
- “Without doubt the change to a Faculty as opposed to 3 smaller teams has been a very effective change for me and the area as a whole. We are more supported as a Faculty and the levels of communication are greater between the 3 teams. As a result we share best practice and ideas and have developed a consistency of approach which enables us to track patterns and trends much easier. This is especially important when looking at how the new Schemes of Work can tie in” (9.5,10.3)
- “As a result of my training via the Leading from the Middle programme I find that I now look at ways of them leading the team and department and not just me advising what we should do. It is a much more consultative process and creates stronger buy-in and produces some great ideas” (9.4,10.2)

During the assessment process one comment made by a member of staff provides an excellent overview of the findings throughout the process *“you should come and work here, you would love it, honestly, you would!”*

CONCLUSION

Meeting the Standard

In concluding that the Standard is met, the assessor confirms that Langley School continues to be recognised as an Investor in People.

Recognition as an Investor in People

Recognition is granted for a period not exceeding three years from 6th December 2007. The current guidance states that the organisation can seek assessment at any stage provided the period between each assessment does not exceed three years. The organisation should discuss the exact timing of the next assessment by contacting West Midlands Quality Centre. An appropriate Assessor will be appointed nearer the time.

Jackie Page

Assessor on behalf of West Midlands Quality Centre

Date : 13th December 2007