

IN CONFIDENCE

RECOGNISING
EXCELLENCE
Raising Performance

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REVIEW REPORT

For

THE PRINCE OF WALES SCHOOL

ASSESSOR: Derek Johnson

DATE: 8th April 2011



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | South
West

Investors in People South West is delivered by Recognising Excellence Ltd, Unit 20 Highnam Business Centre, Two Mile Lane, Highnam, Gloucester GL2 8DN Tel: 01452 413641 Email: info@recognisingexcellence.co.uk www.recognisingexcellence.co.uk

Registered in England number: 06506091

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary
2. Background and Review Process
3. Outcomes of Review
4. Continuous Improvement Activity

Appendix: Review Framework - Summary of Findings

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prince of Wales School has a well-deserved reputation of excellence in all areas of teaching and learning, and in leadership and management. This is all the more worthy considering the diversity of the children in terms of ability with a number of children having a statement of special needs. The immediate impression gained by the Assessor was of a school that cares and inspires, and one that provides a happy learning environment. It is clearly an excellent starting point for children embarking on their school life.

The strengths of the School are numerous, and the following are but just a few of those of particular note:

- The School is not content to 'sit on its laurels' of being classified as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and continues to stretch the boundaries in the quality of its teaching and learning delivery. This is clear from the comprehensive School Development Plan that has as its strap lines:
 "...where we are all inspired to learn" [and this includes staff and parents as well as pupils with a comment from one interviewee of the benefit of "learning from being a learner".]
 "...where every child matters"
- The integration of ICT into all areas of learning both in school and, wherever practical, at home. The School has taken a leading role in the introduction of SWGfL's (South West Grid for Learning Trust's) Merlin scheme ("More magic less dust") that provides an interactive on line learning platform that can be accessed at school and at home. The initial journey began in May 2009 with much trialling and training ready for introduction in September 2010. Of specific note was the training of some Year 2 and Year 4 pupils to act as mentors (Merlin Wizards) for both pupils and staff, and the engagement with parents. After a wisely cautious approach, the scheme appears to have been widely and enthusiastically received.
- The School Development Plan is an extremely valuable strategic document to improve performance that sets out clear goals that link neatly to the School's vision and aims, and strategies to achieve them. Where appropriate, Action Plans are also developed to cascade the goals into working objectives.
- The enthusiasm and professionalism of the staff came over very strongly. The credit for this rests in many areas including staff recruitment and selection, staff development, effective leadership and management, and staff feeling respected and trusted. Both teachers and teaching assistants are included in teaching and learning development activities including inclusion awareness and strategies.

- Membership of DASP (Dorchester Area Schools Partnership) has brought many benefits to the participating schools including the Prince of Wales School. Indeed, the Head Teacher has had a leading role in this organisation. However, the cuts in funding that are being experienced currently have had an impact on DASP although success has been achieved in securing an additional source of funds that ameliorate to some extent the reductions imposed. Nonetheless, this has been a valuable means of supporting the activities of the schools concerned and in the development of staff. Despite the reductions that have been faced, DASP continues to be a source of strength.
- It is worth mentioning also, that the School is perceived as an excellent opportunity for developing leadership skills. Tributes were paid to the Head Teacher's part in this respect in being an excellent role model, in being able to bring out the best in staff, and in encouraging and coaching/mentoring staff to develop leadership qualities.

It is always difficult to identify areas for further development and improvement in high performing organisations such as the Prince of Wales School. However, the following suggestions will be covered later in this report:

- The School's excellent reputation in giving people the opportunity to develop and practice leadership strategies needs careful management of people's subsequent expectations.
- To consider whether there is any advantage in the School being recognised as a training establishment.
- Ensure that the transition of children with special needs to the middle school is managed as well as it is for other children.

2. BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Review took place according to the plan agreed.

3. OUTCOMES OF ASSESSMENT / REVIEW

- Recognition against the Investors in People Standard

The Prince of Wales School fully meets the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. I am pleased to confirm that there are no actions required to meet the Standard, following this successful Review Visit.

Congratulations on your achievement.

- Feedback on the appropriate aspects of the Investors in People framework that relate to The Prince of Wales School business objectives and agreed review objectives as follows:

➤ Creating an inspiring, stimulating and challenging curriculum which is relevant to all children. (Indicators 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9.)

The first section of the School Development Plan sets out a Statement of Curriculum Aims that is further enhanced by a specific goal relating to the strategy for children to enjoy a relevant and inspiring curriculum. Training has been agreed to support this goal and meetings take place at all levels to involve and inspire staff in its delivery. There were many examples of how this is being achieved including children being involved in making puppets in relation to work on Shakespeare's plays and enjoying it (an impressive achievement at first school level), and cross curricular activities involving gardening, cooking and ecological initiatives. Staff also appear to be enjoying the challenge with considerable empowerment and recognition for what they are achieving with the children. The training that has been provided has given staff the confidence to rise to such challenges.

➤ Developing children as active learners and responsible citizens. (Indicators 1, 3, 6, 7.)

The key to success in this area is in achieving a balance between children led and adult led initiatives. The Mission Statement covers a wide range of areas in which the School aims to develop children's interests and abilities which are clearly borne out from the interviews that described exploring and various outdoor activities. There are also strategies within the School Development Plan that relate to the Rights Respecting Schools programme, Citizenship and Rainbow scheme that incorporate training development for staff in using language that is appropriate to this strategy to manage children's behaviour. Supporting this from the children's perspective is the involvement of Pupil Ambassadors in monitoring adults' use of positive language. The enthusiasm of staff is clear from the ownership that they have taken for building this into the curriculum.

➤ Developing strategies to ensure that children are safeguarded within an active learning environment. (Indicators 1, 2, 6, 8, 9.)

With an active learning strategy, safeguarding of children can be more challenging. However, the School has Action Plans in place covering the implementation of the safeguarding policy and in ensuring that the premises are maintained to provide a safe environment. Training in the use of risk assessments is scheduled and will include facilities within the new Merlin suite. There is an annual safeguarding audit and CRB checks are carried out as would be expected. Staff referred to the training that they had undertaken and how they had found it invaluable in keeping their

awareness and knowledge of good safeguarding practice up to date. They also acknowledged the importance of this strategy in ensuring that their responsibilities and liabilities are quite clear.

➤ Maximising achievement in mathematics and literacy. (Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.)

There is a continued emphasis on maximising achievement in mathematics and literacy with strategic plans for both areas. There is a whole new raft of teaching strategies and professional development to improve practice. Staff also referred to, and welcomed the input given on assessing pupils' progress and the use of tracking systems to monitor progress. People spoke highly of their subject leaders in the support and leadership given, and in the way feedback is given following lesson observations. There is also the opportunity to observe good and outstanding practice that was found to be very helpful. Mention was made of how people's contributions are recognised and appreciated that tended to be a good motivator to continue to improve performance.

➤ The School's leadership and management strategy (Indicator 4)

The culture of the School is very much orientated to encouraging people to take the lead on projects. Professional development is accessed and qualifications in leadership and management are taken up. It is perhaps unusual for so many opportunities for undertaking leadership responsibility spread across the staffing in a relatively small organisation. In the true ethos of the Investors in People Standard, this is about empowering people and trusting them with the aim of improving performance. Recognition can be gained by the achievements of pupils and colleagues, and possibly by promotion or by obtaining a position of responsibility at another school. It is a strategy that works very well, and people welcome the chance to take responsibility and leadership of specific projects. There are cautionary notes that are referred to later in this report, but it is building the reputation of the people who work at the School and the School itself, and most importantly, it is driving the outstanding learning outcomes of the pupils.

➤ How the School's learning and development strategy builds capability (Indicator 2.5 EF)

As indicated above, the strategy of a wide distribution of leadership opportunities along with a supporting development programme is developing leadership capability within the School. However, the learning and development strategy goes beyond this and embraces a wide range of professional development that includes all staff and Governors. It recognises the different needs of people at all levels so that no matter what their role, they have the training support that they need be it through a formal course or by sharing learning experiences with each other. If there is one common

denominator for such a strategy it is in the building of people's confidence in performing their role. In return, the School's 'store of capability' grows and it is sustained by being nurtured through observation, coaching, mentoring and recognition. Indeed, this could be a role model for other organisations.

➤ How the School makes effective use of learning and development resources (Indicator 8.4 EF)

Resources for learning and development are not always dependant on funding, which in any case is an area that is under pressure, but is also about sharing knowledge and experience. The age of technology is now becoming more relevant and accessible. Whilst people often share 'hard copies' of their own learning materials, there is now much on-line resource available for staff at all levels. It is also about the time people have available for learning and development, and personal commitments can intrude on this. The School encourages and supports personal development utilising external provision when appropriate (and affordable), and also in-house training as well as providing on-line access to resources. This is now a more efficient way of developing people in that everyone has their own preferred style of learning, and having a range of resources to select from, such development is likely to be more effective. The challenge is in keeping records up to date, and the School is encouraging people to maintain their own CPD plan.

- Progress on suggestions for improvement offered during the previous review which were:

➤ Explore opportunities for developing team working activities such as in sharing individual learning experiences, and in maintaining learning groups beyond obtaining a qualification.

There has been much progress on this with evidence gathered of sharing learning experiences at individual and team levels.

➤ Consider developing a mentoring scheme.

Mentoring does now feature as a strategy at the School and whilst it is not a scheme as such, it is nonetheless effective.

- Awareness of Train to Gain / Skills for Life / Skills Pledge

There is awareness of these initiatives.

- Feedback on opportunities for further improvement and continuous development

➤ The concept of developing leadership skills by, among other means, providing opportunities to lead is an excellent strategy. However, it may create expectations

that may not necessarily be able to be met within the School. Such expectations need to be managed in order that a realistic view is developed in order to maintain the benefits that arise both to the member of staff and the School from the strategy.

- As a further issue arising from the above, the fact is that the School does provide superb opportunities for people to develop their potential. If there were an advantage for the School being recognised in some way as a Training School, it may help to further the culture that a position with the School may well be a stepping stone for career development.
- The School has a well-established provision for children with special needs with facilities and staff skills that may not be replicated in the middle school to which the children transfer. There are good relationships with the middle school concerned and transition is managed well. However, it may be worth considering sharing specialist skills between the schools to ensure that children with special needs are supported equally as well as for other pupils.

It is recommended that The Prince of Wales School reviews the Investors in People framework and identifies additional areas of relevance for future reviews. It is suggested that the following areas may be worthwhile for further development and review:

- Top managers make sure that the organisation has key performance indicators to improve performance.
- Top managers can describe how they have created a culture that encourages continuous learning and promotes the skills and knowledge at every level.
- Top managers can describe how they define the current and future capabilities managers need in line with the organisation's purpose, vision and values.

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk provides guidance on continuing to work with Investors in People and will help to keep you updated on any changes and developments.

You may also wish to visit Investors in People South West's website at www.recognisingexcellence.co.uk for useful information on products, services and events, and the latest local Investors in People news and updates.

Examples of services offered include:

- Celebrating your success at the next Investors in People Networking Club which also provides the opportunity to meet other organisations in your area to share experiences and ideas and improve your business knowledge. So feel free to attend as many as you like.

- If you would like further advice tailored to your own particular circumstances and needs to assist you in line with the findings of this report, Investors in People South West's Advisory Service will be more than happy to assist.
- Consider attending one of our workshops or asking one of our trainers to design bespoke in house development for you.

Alternatively you can phone Investors in People South West on 01452 413641 to find out more about any of these areas.

4. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY

A key part of your Investors in People review is the continuous improvement activity and the following Improvement/Action Plan can be used to assist you in this respect.

OPTIONAL FORMAT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT / ACTION PLAN

The first column of this Plan has been completed for you as a basis for moving your organisation forward.

Area for Further Development	Action agreed	Responsibility	Date
The School's excellent reputation in giving people the opportunity to develop and practice leadership strategies needs careful management of people's subsequent expectations.			
To consider whether there is any advantage in the School being recognised as a training establishment.			
Ensure that the transition of children with special needs to the middle school is managed as well as it is for other children.			

Date for your next Investors in People assessor visit: April 2014

APPENDIX

REVIEW FRAMEWORK / SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

KEY:

GOOD PRACTICE IS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED
GOOD PRACTICE IS DEVELOPING
GOOD PRACTICE HAS NOT YET COMMENCED
NOT CONSIDERED AT THIS VISIT / EVIDENCE NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS GROUP

]

THE INVESTORS IN PEOPLE FRAMEWORK: A SUMMARY OF ITS CONTENTS

PLAN				DO				REVIEW	
01: BUSINESS STRATEGY	02: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	03: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	04: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	05: MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS	06: RECOGNITION & REWARD	07: INVOLVEMENT & EMPOWERMENT	08: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	09: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	10: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

THE STANDARD TOP MANAGERS SHOULD MAKE SURE (AND THEIR PEOPLE SHOULD CONFIRM) THAT:

The organisation has a vision/purpose, strategy and plan	Learning priorities are clear & linked to the plan	People are encouraged to contribute ideas	Managers are clear about the capabilities they need to lead, manage & develop people	Managers are effective & can describe how they lead, manage & develop their people	People believe they make a difference	Ownership & responsibility are encouraged	People's learning & development needs are met	Investment in learning can be quantified	Evaluation results in improvements to people strategies & management
People are involved in planning	Resources for learning & development are made available	There is equality of opportunity for development & support	People know what effective managers should be doing		People believe their contribution is valued	People are involved in decision-making		Impact can be demonstrated	
Representative groups (where appropriate) are consulted when developing the plan	The impact will be evaluated								