

Peer Review Case Study

Name of Headteacher and School writing the case study

The Headteachers writing this case study from the Harwich Education Partnership (HEP) are Julie O'Mara, Partnership Lead and Headteacher of Chase Lane Primary School, Elizabeth Bartholemew, Headteacher of The Mayflower Primary School and Mark Millbourne, Headteacher of All Saints' Primary School.

Headteacher's of the HEP took part in the local authority Peer to Peer Review training in the summer term of 2016. Since then, 4 schools have had a peer review of their schools which has impacted upon individual school improvement planning and the maturity of the partnership. During this period, there have been significant changes in school leadership with the appointment of 5 new Headteachers (including the secondary school), one primary school leaving the partnership and another joining an academy.

Since 2016, 4 schools have taken part in the Peer to Peer Review process within the partnership.

Context of the Partnership

- How many schools?
- Size of schools
- How long have the schools been working together
- Number of Peer Reviews undertaken

Six schools work together in the HEP:

The Harwich and Dovercourt High School, Spring Meadow Primary School, The Mayflower Primary School, All Saints' VA Primary School, Chase Lane Primary School and Two Village VC Primary School. The schools range in size from one form entry to two form entry schools, 3 primary schools in the partnership have Nursery settings attached.

The schools have been working together as a formal partnership for several years, however there has been significant change in leadership in the past 12 months and the partnership Headteachers have recently reviewed its Memorandum of Understanding and have refocused their work on more strategic, pupil led improvement across the geographical area.

The partnership has undertaken 4 peer reviews, so not all schools in the partnership have been reviewed. Each review has been followed up by a quality assurance meeting to evaluate both the robustness and impact of the process.

Key Issue/s that your partnership identified to overcome?

The key issue which the partnership faced was the ability to work cohesively, developing transparency creating a purposeful partnership which focused on raising outcomes for the children in our community. As a partnership we wanted to be able to identify individual expertise within school as well as their needs and be able to develop systematic systems of support. Due to changes in leadership, it was essential to outline the basis of the partnership stating expectations around commitment and purpose.

During The Mayflower review, it was identified that there was inconsistencies in the quality of assessment throughout the school. The outcome report concluded that assessment processes were not rigorous or sufficiently robust, teachers lacked confidence in assessing pupils against age related expectations and data from some year groups was found to be inaccurate.

As a result of poor assessment processes, pupil targets were not consistently based on assessment evidence; in some classes, pupils' work was not appropriately challenging and there was limited teacher accountability for pupil progress and attainment.

What did the partnership learn from undertaking the peer review? What did you find out that you didn't already know? And how did you respond to this?

In regards to our most recent review at The Mayflower, outcomes confirmed the views' of Senior Leaders that assessment was a key priority for school improvement.

The review enabled Senior Leaders to work with the reviewing team to unpick whole school assessment procedures, including the following areas for development:

- assessment for learning strategies, particularly marking and feedback
- teachers' understanding of age related expectations
- differentiation
- moderation

This gave the SLT a greater insight into the 'mechanics' of the school. Strengths were identified within the staff team so that best practice could be shared across year groups and Key Stages.

Following the peer review, all pupils were assessed using a published assessment framework in order to establish a more accurate baseline from which to measure progress. This enabled the SLT to hold meaningful pupil progress meetings and to engage in discussions with teachers about the progress journey of children within their classes.

The whole school coaching session, led by the Improvement Champion, outlined the findings from the review using the matrix. From this, a key area was: Assessment for Learning. The Improvement Champion, using coaching, enabled the participants to find solutions. From this, the SLT devised further sessions to make continued improvements developing teachers' understanding of age related expectations so that gaps in pupils' learning and understanding could be identified and addressed. This has led to increased pupil progress.

This coaching method, enabled participants to generate their own solutions. This model has been adopted for our Improvement Champions.

This session had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning observed by the SLT following the review particularly in lower Key Stage Two.

What was the Impact and benefits

- For the Partnership as a whole by undertaking peer review
- For individual school leaders
- On the staff of the process
- On school improvement/outcomes of peer review

Since the review teachers in Year 5 across the partnership have worked together to moderate pupils' writing and further moderation activities for Year 1, 3 and 4 teachers have been planned for the summer term.

Schools within the partnership have identified similar issues and this will inform the 2018 – 2019 Partnership Improvement Plan. The Partnership will use joint resources and funding to address the key issues.

Partnership Headteachers have a greater understanding of the schools within the partnership and are beginning to share best practice and expertise – an example of how the reviews have impacted the partnership is the use of writing moderation in all year groups, teaching teams meet across the partnership to moderate their writing. The Deputy Headteacher at Spring Meadow Primary School led the coaching session with staff at The Mayflower Primary School, following its review and will be facilitating Year 6 writing moderation activities in May 2018.

In addition, there is an increased level of trust between the Headteachers within the Partnership which has enabled challenging conversations to be held as part of the review

process.

The impact of The Mayflower Primary School review can be measured in the following ways:

- Informed school improvement planning
- Increased teacher accountability
- Improved understanding of assessment processes
- Increased clarity of feedback and marking
- Increased progress in pockets of the school particularly in year 5
- Effective deployment of staff to maximise the impact of recent CPD and to share best practice

As a partnership, we share our headline data in the Autumn term and review the partnership's school improvement plan to identify needs of the partnership. This work has resulted in the deployment of an English lead who has worked across the partnership to support writing, particularly writing at greater depth, with the intention of increasing the percentage of children achieving greater depth in 2018 and 2019 by working with our current year 5 and year 6 teachers.

What is your partnership going to do next based on the learning/impact of the Peer Review?

The partnership is committed to the peer review process and has been incorporated within our Memorandum of Understanding. As a partnership, we aspire to ensure that a peer review takes place each half term, so that each school has a Peer Review once a year. The outcomes from reviews will inform the HEP improvement plan, along with headline data to improve outcomes for the children in our partnership.

The HEP also plans to commission support to further develop AfL within the primary schools as this is identified as an area for development.