

SETI Peer Review Case Study - 29.3.18 Context of the Partnership:

Our peer review group is currently made up three schools:

- Edward Francis Primary School - 426 pupils
- Grove Wood Primary School - 630 pupils
- Hockley Primary School - 330 pupils

The schools decided to work together after attending peer review training led by the Education Development Trust in May 2016. At the time of writing, five peer reviews have taken place. We had worked together previously as schools, but not as closely as this. It was important that we established an openness and expectation from the outset and we all held full commitment to the process.

Key Issue/s that your partnership identified to overcome?

No key issue was identified at the establishment of the group - those involved believed that the schools involved could learn from one another due to our similar contexts (i.e. catchment areas).

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?

One member of the group attended a session, again led by the Education Development Trust, that involved schools who had already started a peer reviewing process. One of the key areas of learning from this session was the importance of clear 'Memorandum of Understanding' in which the participating schools agreed key principles and the protocols to be followed in the peer review process. The headteachers of our group are of the opinion that this document has been essential to the success of the subsequent process.

An unanticipated benefit of the process has been that, at every review, those schools reviewing have benefitted as much as the school that is being reviewed.

Changes, arising out of completed reviews, have been made to the process such as:

- the focus should be narrow due to the limited time available. The focus is discussed at the pre review meeting. The Headteacher

whose peer review is about to take place will suggest the focus, often having discussed it with their SLT initially. This is then fully discussed at the pre meet and a timetable of the day is established and agreed. The objectives of the day are also clearly recorded.

- Those conducting the review go to great lengths to make those being reviewed (e.g. teaching staff and Learning Support Assistants) are as comfortable as possible - the school being reviewed should feel that this is a collaborative (rather than a judgmental) process.
- Initially, reviews were conducted on Mondays but this was found to increase the anxiety experienced by staff.
- Efforts have been made to reduce the workload of the school being reviewed (e.g. initially it was decided that the school should present various pieces of documentation to those reviewing the school such as the school development plan, self evaluation and assessment results but this has been considered unnecessary subsequently). Data shared is now more specific eg one school had focus on writing, so writing data was shared, another of us on provision, progress and attainment of the disadvantaged group, so specific data here was shared. This decreases workload as is targeted to the review.
- In our view, three schools is a big enough group - the demands of peer reviewing and completing the follow up work would be too great if more schools were involved.

What was the Impact and benefits?

- Participating schools have observed a large number of things on reviews that they have then gone on to apply in their own schools. The process has also given those taking part a means of comparing aspects in their schools such as behaviour, premises, quality of teaching etc. Some specific examples that have improved practice, are use of LSAs to impact on learning, whole school review of guided reading. Sometimes the main outcome for improvement evolves from the review day. Eg the guided reading review came from a spelling focus

- Schools and staff within the group have become more familiar with one another and are more comfortable to approach one another on school development issues. Firm links and sharing of practice have developed. Eg. Deputies across schools working together further on provision for disadvantaged.
- The process has been developmental for both headteachers and senior staff (such as those who have become 'Improvement Champions' and have led CPD sessions in other schools)
- The longer the process has gone on the less anxious the staff of participating schools have become.

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

- The group is considering the use of reviewers other than headteachers.
- Participating headteachers are keen to involve other schools in the process by offering documentation, participating in reviews etc This process is developing across our SETI partnership where the paperwork frameworks, eg memorandum of understanding, timetabling, outcome reports have been shared as models for other schools to use and form their own peer review partnerships.
- Links beyond the peer review have been made with key members of staff in our schools and they are working collaboratively together on key areas such as supporting disadvantaged pupils.