

Primary Improvement Partnership (PIP) NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2018

Positive Pragmatic Practical

The Primary Improvement Partnership continues to bring the Local Authority and sector together to identify collaborative opportunities to support school improvement across North Yorkshire. We are supporting the transition of improvement provision in response to potential future changes to NYES structural and strategic reorganisation, as well as DFE approaches.

We have distributed this newsletter a little earlier this term in order to update you on changes locally and nationally. Thank you for all the brilliant work that you continue to do in our schools, and enjoy a well-earned Christmas break when it comes!

TSC Developments

In the summer the DFE decided to end the SSIF process for school improvement. The SRIBs have been disbanded and a new approach is being taken towards school improvement. It was disappointing, but perhaps unsurprising, that the majority of Round 3 SSIF bids were unsuccessful.

On 9th November, the DFE notified us of the changes that will be made. There will continue to be a sector-led approach to school improvement, and that this will be aimed initially at schools who do not meet the DFEs published floor targets or coasting measures, or have had two consecutive Requires Improvement judgements.

NLEs across the country will be meeting with DFE in November and January to identify how this strategy can be delivered, and we anticipate that further information will be given to qualifying schools early in the New Year.

Consultation on LA School Improvement Partnerships

As you will be aware, the LA is consulting on a change in the approach to school improvement across the authority. Under this consultation, the current EY, Primary, Secondary and Special Improvement Partnerships will end. A new Learning Trust will be formed, along with five local improvement boards and school improvement commissioning boards. These will be cross-phase and will deal with SEN issues as well as the school improvement agenda. This is an exciting development and allows for decisions to be affected locally that are aimed to address discreet local issues.

The School Improvement Strategy is based upon 3 key principles:

1. North Yorkshire is a sector led school improvement system whereby all key stakeholders have a shared vision for improving educational outcomes where:
 - every child has a school place;
 - the needs of vulnerable children are catered for;
 - no school is left behind;
 - schools and academies are challenged to work together;
 - weak or declining performance is quickly identified and corrected;
 - data and knowledge are shared across schools;
 - there is accountability to local communities.
2. All schools belong to a partnership. Relationships remain vital, but are no longer enough on their own: schools are increasingly seeing the importance of being connected to at least one formal network. For the vast majority of school leaders, relationships are being transformed into more formal, self-conscious and professional connections.
3. All schools are to be good or better by September 2021. In order to achieve this ambition, underperformance will be dealt with promptly and weak leadership and teaching immediately tackled so that every child is able to attend a good or outstanding school within the next three years

These principles are aspirational and all school improvement stakeholders are expected to adopt them.

The local improvement boards are to be chaired by headteachers. This is important if they are to be sector-led and can influence work that has a direct bearing upon the issues that we are facing. All headteachers are encouraged to become involved, and to help shape the future for our children.

Changes to the Ofsted Inspection Framework

You will be aware that the HCMI has proposed significant changes to the Inspection Framework from September 2019. This marks a notable shift away from an outcomes-driven framework to one that looks directly at the provision for pupils in the school. Central to this provision is the curriculum, and this forms the central basis for the new framework.

All schools are encouraged to begin considering their unique curriculum at the earliest opportunity. This may be in the form of a curriculum review that identifies what and how children are taught.

The National Curriculum that was introduced in 2014 marks a real shift in concept towards a 'mastery' curriculum that is founded in knowledge. Amanda Spielman is keen that inspectors investigate how these national objectives are being delivered in each school.

The key change is a move towards a more knowledge-rich curriculum that is aligned to the underlying principles of the National Curriculum. As the National Curriculum Programme of Study statements are so broad, there is significant flexibility for each school to determine what and how it will teach these aspects of knowledge. The decision to structure the progression of the body of knowledge should be taken from an informed position, based upon research outcomes so that there is demonstrable evidence behind the decision.

There is also a greater focus on schools' using evidence from cognitive psychology to create a curriculum that plans teaching to support pupils' development of memory so pupils' remember more as they move through school. A school's planned curriculum must make sure pupils' knowledge is built in sequential components over time. In light of this significant change it is important that schools begin reviewing their curriculum's rationale and principles. It would be a good starting point for schools to read OFSTED's recently published curriculum working group report 2. Colleagues are encouraged to begin professional conversations about the implications of the new curriculum and the LA and TSAs are initiating professional dialogue across our schools.

Changes to the inspection framework have been proposed for pragmatic as well as philosophical reasons. Developments in primary education in recent years have led to schools making autonomous decisions in assessment and the curriculum. Inspectors no longer have a standardised national measure with which to judge the impact of these changes. Therefore, without understanding what and how a school has determined what children should achieve in each year they are unable to judge how effective they are. This means that schools should articulate clearly what they expect children to know in each subject each year, so that they can be held to account for whether they are achieving that aim or not. Importantly, this progression should be based upon a robust evidence base, so that inspectors can have confidence that it is fundamentally sound.

The LA are running half-day training courses to examine these changes in more detail, examine the implications of the changes, and share good practice in response to them.