



Primary Improvement Partnership (PIP) NEWSLETTER

Spring 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.

There has been much to celebrate during the Spring term, including successful inspection outcomes and rapidly improving schools across the authority. Thank you to all school leaders for your continued hard work.

PLN Meetings

We have endeavoured to create agendas for PLN meetings that are practical and purposeful. We always try to ensure that the content meets the following criteria:

- Leadership of learning – research and initiatives to improve teaching and learning.
- Sessions that are practical – approaches that have been used successfully in classrooms and can lead to school improvement.
- Local and national messages – briefings, performance outcomes, update messages, statutory requirements.
- Publicity of professional development – both LA and NYPTSA.

We hope that you have noted an improvement in the agendas and have found the availability of afternoon time for TSA/ alliance meetings valuable. We intend to continue this format in the future.

The summer term agenda will focus upon the use of EEF 'Guidance Reports'. Increasingly, schools are expected to implement strategies that have been researched and proven to be effective in other schools. We would like to investigate the approaches that North Yorkshire schools take to this and how we can learn from others in order to improve the effectiveness of how we work. Further information in advance of the PLN can be found at <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/a-schools-guide-to-implementation/>

Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF)

The SSIF has dominated much of our thinking over the last few months. We have been incredibly successful across North Yorkshire in accessing funding for school improvement

through this process; to date we have received over £1M to support individual schools in specific projects that will lead to improvement.

The way in which we bid for future SSIF funding is changing. Our new regional TSA Council representative, Phil Bennington, is creating a 'brokerage hub' which will include all partner organisations involved in school improvement, including the LA and TSAs. This hub will identify schools that would benefit from support and will target more specifically projects that will meet collective needs. We hope that this will enable us to work in an increasingly strategic way.

The next round of the SSIF closed in April, and we anticipate that successful projects will be notified by September.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-school-improvement-fund>

Effective School Improvement

The PIP commissioned North Star TSA to undertake research into effective school improvement. We know that different methodology has been employed around the country and we want to learn from those strategies that have had the most impact.

The research report is detailed and draws from a large number of sources. It summarises:

“Sir Kevan Collins of The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) states in their recent report, *Putting Evidence to Work – A School’s Guide to Implementation* (February 2018), ‘We have access to more robust evidence about which strategies have been shown to be effective... but generating evidence can only take us so far... what really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day lived reality of schools. In light of the current landscape and what the research tells us, we have arrived at the following recommendations for driving school support, in future.’

How can we synthesise an understanding of what works, nationally, and decide on a system of school support that is collaborative and effectively provides school support to improve standards?

Suggested protocols for developing effective collaboration:

Schools agreeing clear arrangements for sharing data and providing peer-level support and challenge;

- Local leaders regularly meeting to review the school-improvement needs across their area, broker school-to-school support and review and monitor impact;
- Ensure a focus on outcomes for all children – engaging schools and academies and generating pace and demonstrating momentum;

- Operate a 'blended model' of school support, ensuring that the Local Authority and Teaching Schools work together and not in spite of each other, making the best of all expertise and skills within the local system;
- Establishing a clear vision of a good education system for all children, shared by political, corporate and school leaders;
- Establish clear systems that enable schools to be at the heart of a commissioning process which defines the need, secures services from the best-quality provider and carefully evaluates impact on outcomes for pupils;
- Establish and embed effective, systematic and coherent ways of joint commissioning between the LA, TSAs, MATs and other providers in a mixed economy;
- Continuing to reflect and evolve in an ever-changing school-improvement system;
- Ensure that all key stakeholders have critical roles to play;
- Align all key stakeholders through a 'collective capacity', helping to sustain progress;
- Ensure a shift in emphasis from monitoring and reacting to failure towards providing support that schools value and is geared towards helping them sustain high-quality leadership, teaching and learning;
- Focus on giving schools access to new opportunities and expert support to sustain good performance, not only on monitoring and reacting when things go wrong;
- Review and development of the traded services offer to and from the local education system; and
- Establish effective processes to ensure that resources available for school improvement through the SSIF are directed to schools in need and that support packages draw on the highest-quality capacity from within the local education system.

School improvement has changed; the centre of gravity of has moved from local authorities to 'the system' and with it comes new roles and responsibilities for teaching schools, Multi-Academy Trusts, school-led organisations and the Local Authorities themselves. This is a vibrant yet ambiguous landscape and with it come clear challenges. In an increasingly fragmented education system the challenge is for school improvement to be coherent and highly effective, providing the very best opportunities for the pupils in our schools.

'What we need is consistency of purpose, policy and practice. Structure and strategy are not enough. The solution requires the individual and collective ability to build shared meaning, capacity and commitment to action. When large numbers of people have a deeply understood sense of what needs to be done – and see their part in achieving that purpose – coherence emerges and powerful things happen.'

Michael Fullen, *Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts and Systems* (2016)"

The PIP will analyse the findings of the research and will continue to work towards effective partnership and collaboration to enable these to be effective.

Our thanks go to Emma Higgins, School Improvement Director at Elevate for co-ordinating this excellent piece of work.

LA Appointments

We would like to congratulate Judith Kirk on her appointment as Assistant Director for Education and Skills, and Andy Lancashire as Head of School Improvement at NYES. We look forward to working in partnership with them in the coming months to benefit school improvement throughout all North Yorkshire schools.