

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE VISIT / CALL REPORT

Organisation:	Lower Farm Primary School
Contact(s):	Sarah Milner – Headteacher and Laura O'Donovan – Deputy Head.
Specialist:	Gordon Stopani (GS)
Date of Activity:	7 th September 2015
Duration of Activity: (on and off site)	0.50

Objectives

To complete an 18-month IIP Review visit.

Visit/Call Summary

Met with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher to review the improvement actions identified following the School's last Assessment which took place in January 2014. The findings are summarise below.

The School has taken action on all of the suggested improvement areas described in the 2014 Assessment Report to strengthen its existing approaches.

In respect of School improvement planning, staff were found to have a greater degree of involvement and input to this process. Consideration is given to what is currently done and what would be "even better if". During meetings and using questionnaires, staff opinions and views are more widely and more regularly sought.

As a result, staff at all levels have a better understanding of the links and alignment between the School Improvement Plan and the roles they perform. Governors have also strengthened their links with the School and key activities such as School Improvement Planning, thus increasing their understanding of this critical activity.

Teaching Assistants now have their own regular meeting forum and CPD programme, which is led by the recently appointed Assistant Headteacher, who leads on teaching and learning within the School.

Leadership skills were found to be being encouraged and developed for all teaching staff within the School and all have led during School INSET days as part of this approach.

Appraisal has now become more firmly embedded within the School with staff at all levels receiving an appraisal of their performance and an opportunity to discuss learning and development needs, in the wider context of helping the School to improve.

This includes before and after school staff who now also receive an appraisal and who have agreed developmentally-based targets relating to their role, e.g. visiting other settings to experience other practices and approaches.

The School has developed a clear procedure for appraisers to use to aid consistency of approach and to assist with the process of setting targets that are linked to the development needs of the School. The latter includes model targets to aid understanding.

Staff development as a whole within the School was found to have increased. Existing expertise has been deployed effectively across the School to enhance teaching and learning and in fact most CPD activities are internally-based. Learning and knowledge is being cascaded across the School more consistently and regularly by staff as part of its approach to gain best advantage from the range of CPD activities undertaken.

Deploying such approaches has enabled staff to access drop in sessions and undertake paired observations as a means for developing and sharing their practices. The appointment of the Assistant Headteacher post has increased the School's capacity to focus on CPD activities linked to teaching and learning, whilst at the same time increased the overall level of leadership capacity to undertake other activities.

Subject leaders are currently developing their management and leadership skills and are receiving support via one of the local authority Improvement Advisers. Most recently, this has focused on the differences between managers and leaders, as well as helping them to create a personal development plan. Access to mentoring with a Senior Leader has also been provided, alongside the involvement of a Link Governor.

The School has continued to foster collaborative arrangements with three other schools in particular. These arrangements are being used to good effect to compare and share practices that can usefully be taken back and deployed within Lower Farm Primary. Activities include collaboration in respect of moderation in maths and writing. Importantly, review and evaluation of the impact and benefits is a key component of the School's approach.

The Headteacher has also forged a strong link with another headteacher from a nearby school and they meet regularly to rate and compare practices, identify areas of strength and those for further improvement, as well as capture ideas that can be tried out within their respective settings.

Conclusions

The School has reviewed, evaluated and developed its approaches significantly since the last IIP Assessment and as a result they have become more embedded and robust.

The latter is clearly positively impacting the School, which in its most recent Ofsted Inspection achieve its first 'Good' rating for nine years.

Strong and effective role-modelled leadership by SLT members are clearly also having a very positive impact on the School. This is resulting in better levels of progress and achievement for pupils as well as greater levels of teamwork and cohesiveness amongst staff at all levels. The School is a great example of an organisation which effectively deploys the practices advocated within the IIP Standard and derives the benefits of doing so.

Future Help and Support

None at this time.

Agreed actions, responsibilities and timescales

GS to contact the School in Autumn Term 2016 to start the planning process for the School's 2017 IIP Assessment.