

A Leeds Family of Schools takes the initiative to develop skilled managers

The Inner North East (SRB) family of schools in Leeds have introduced a new scheme 'Skills for Middle Management' which aims to prepare teachers to engage in the national programmes for leadership and management run by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL).

Andrew Eastwood, Headteacher at St Matthew's Primary School in Leeds 7, and leading the project, spoke of his enthusiasm for the new scheme:

"There seemed to be a gulf between the practical daily lives of teachers in school and the aspirations of the national programmes" he explained, "and we therefore wanted a scheme which would introduce our staff to the essential skills of school management as well as guide them into the national framework for developing school leaders."

The family of nine schools realised the benefits of working collaboratively and using the network to promote common understanding and share best practice. Two of the schools, St Matthew's Primary and Chapel Allerton Primary, applied to the Primary Partnerships fund and were awarded funding for the scheme on the understanding that they would use external partners.

"We wanted a scheme with a difference, with added value" said Andrew, "and we hope to achieve this through linking our one year programme straight into the national 'Leading from the Middle' (LftM) programme and by seeking accreditation for the scheme through a local university."

The programme rolls over three years, one cohort each year. The aim is for each of the nine schools in the family to send two teaching staff on each cohort. The year begins with a full INSET day; there are two twilight sessions each term, and a final day. Participants begin the 'Leading from the Middle programme' the day after completion.

The programme has been developed with NCSL and Gill Tricoglus from CCDU is over-seeing the process as 'external' adviser. The schools in the family share the delivery and provide space for the sessions. Key components of the programme include:

- Recognising and promoting effective teaching and learning
- Gathering information for evaluation
- Effective change through cooperation and collaboration
- Standards, Accountability and Communication
- Planning to act; preparing to lead

Gill, who is the Programme Manager for LftM in the Yorkshire and Humber region, says "The LftM programme assumes that participants will understand and have experience of a range of management tasks and be ready to develop their leadership skills, ie coaching, team working, developing the potential of colleagues. The Skills for Middle Managers programme is an excellent way to support those in middle leadership roles: developing their experience and confidence in carrying out these essential tasks and preparing them for participation in Leading from the Middle. We hope that this will be a model which interests other groups of schools who work collaboratively".

After three years each school will have six developed managers and extensive networking and support mechanisms in place. "My deputy head here at St Matthews is currently a candidate on the NPQH programme (National Professional Qualification for Headship)" says Andrew, "and so after three years we should have a progressive community of staff who are up to date and experienced in modern school management."

The expertise acquired will be disseminated with the help of a resource file which is being developed as the scheme progresses. The project also intends to host a conference at the end of the programme which will be open to schools outside the scheme.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact Andrew Eastwood, email headteacher@st-matthews.leeds.sch.uk Gill Tricoglus, 0113 283 8611 or gill@ccdu.co.uk

