

Esk Valley Teaching Schools Alliance (Glaisdale Primary)

Theme 4: Mixed school status (academy and non- academy) working collaboratively on cluster wide projects

Theme 5: Secondary school working with and supporting primary schools, leading to the provision of shared services

Theme 15: Creation of a Cluster CBM role where no CBM post previously existed

Glaisdale Primary School is the lead school in a cluster which originally contained 8 rural-based primary schools. Over the last few years, the cluster has grown significantly, and is now known as the Esk Valley Teaching Schools Alliance with a membership of 24 schools, cross phase including primary, secondary, post 16, special schools and also a mix of community and faith schools. The Teaching School Alliance covers a wide geographical area with members from as north as Redcar in Teesside, into Whitby town, and south to Malton and the outskirts of York, resulting in a real mix of rural, coastal and small-town schools.

The cluster business manager (CBM) has a history of working in secondary school business management, having worked previously in a specialist school academy trust, initially managing business enterprise and external partnerships. She was increasingly asked to add to her remit, which grew into project management and capital planning, essentially building an CBM role. When the CBM applied for this role she had a particularly strong background and this continues to develop.

Whilst the cluster schools have not traditionally shared staff, there was always a history of sharing events for the pupils and joint CPD. The CBM has added significant developments, setting up the mechanisms in a variety of areas, and this case study focusses on her role in relation to the set-up and sharing of subject leader staff, and bringing in research project funding, thus supporting innovation.

Due to the nature and size of the original 8 cluster schools, it became apparent that the subject leader role could be one area in which effective collaboration could bring about efficiency savings in terms of joint practice. Part of the CBM's role has been setting up the processes, collating high-level information and overseeing action plans to ensure the subject leader project remained on track. The project means those designated to the subject leader role pair up to keep abreast of subject knowledge, and provide the updates of subject knowledge during specified subject knowledge meetings to all the other teaching staff in the cluster. This has significantly saved money by reducing the number of teachers attending all subject knowledge courses, as well as a reduction in travel costs, and supply teacher costs which would be required to cover classes whilst teachers are out on training, in addition this also reduces the amount of time that teachers need to be out of the classroom. In addition, with the CBM covering the mechanics of implementing this project, she has saved Headteacher time.

It is apparent that her role in general is saving Headteacher time across the entire cluster, employing a specialist focus on these key areas. She also provides the 'high-level financial management, including

accounting and budgeting' and strategic leadership which Headteachers' had otherwise been undertaking, thus losing potential time on crucial teaching and learning.

In addition to the subject leader project, and collaborative cluster work, the CBM is also responsible for submitting successful bids for supporting unique pieces of research in teaching and learning. One bid so far secured £2,000 from the local authority. The research aims to measure the impact of the use of technology, specifically iPads, to aid the transition of year 6 pupils in mathematics lessons into year 7 secondary school. The research involves the recording of 30 second-1 minute long clips of the pupils using technology for learning, and these being shown to year 7 teachers to show how the pupils are learning the subject knowledge via ICT, as well as how they interact with the learning material and the utility of the ICT itself. This project is led by the feeder primary schools and supported by the secondary schools in Whitby and in Malton.

The CBM has also submitted a research grant for other research in teaching and learning, and is waiting on the result of that. Where a third grant had initially been rejected the CBM discussed with the Glaisdale Headteacher how they might instead wish to submit grant applications to several smaller organisations for funding. This approach has so far resulted in the establishment of a funding pot which currently covers 75% (£15,000) of the funding required for the project (£20,000), and it looks likely that other grant work will cover the remaining 25%.

Another project that is being developed involves a project that aims to raise aspirations linked to IAG. This project starts with year 6 students and follows them through to year 11, looking at local, national and international careers. So far the CBM has secured sponsorship from local business for seed funding to pilot with a small group of schools. If the pilot is successful. It is intended that this project will work cross phase and also business and community partners.

It is very clear that the CBM is producing and supporting innovative strategic work. She has highlighted how the role being located in a cluster with an abundance of primary schools has presented a steep learning curve, having a background in a single secondary school. However, she sees her role as 'all the other things sitting outside of teaching and learning' as well as 'freeing the teaching school and other school Headteachers' time.' Similarly, 'where the Headteacher makes decisions on certain things, [she] would be guiding, advising and carrying out research.'

The CBM's role has now been made into a permanent role within the schools from 1 September 2015, as it is now considered that the role is self-sustaining following the initial input provided in the SBM PC Grant. This clearly demonstrates the impact of the SBM PC Grant and the CBM is an acknowledged professional by Headteachers across the cluster.