

Probus Community Primary School

Theme 7: Staff restructure leading to savings or improved utilisation

Theme 10: Improved outcomes for pupils through a new facility / service e.g. catering/UIFMS

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

Probus cluster contains 5 schools, all located within rural Cornwall. The Cluster Business Manager (CBM) started in post in September 2014, following an internal promotion.

The CBM has been working on a number of areas, including contract management and re-negotiation, setting up and monitoring a staffing re-structure, and looking towards MAT status where currently there is a more informal cluster arrangement.

Initially, the catering contract sat with the Local Authority (LA), and was coming to an end. The contract was extended by a year whilst re-negotiations continued. The CBM contacted a local company to help with a tendering process, and the 5 schools supplied information on requirements, with the CBM overseeing the collation of input. The two main priorities were cost, and having local produce used in the meals, thus reducing our carbon footprint and teaching pupils about sustainable food. Bids were then submitted by 5 companies for the catering contract, 3 of which were interviewed as part of the tendering process. The company who was awarded the contract had been awarded the Gold 'Food for Life' accreditation, which the schools felt was particularly attractive. In addition, the company had accounted for the increase in its staff pension costs, whereas the other companies had not, and would have therefore meant additional costs on their contracts and to the cluster.

As a result of the success of the catering contract, the schools had a guaranteed income of £5,875 which will increase to just over £14,000 for 15/16 budgets. This is shared between the cluster schools and if the actual profit is higher than the guaranteed income the catering company will share this profit 50% with the individual school. In addition, all schools have discussed with the CBM how pleased they are with the new contractual arrangements. A Headteacher has said "having a CBM with specialist skills to monitor the contract and negotiate best value for our school has led to a significant improvement in the quality of meals for the children". The CBM meets regularly with the company, and then feeds back any developments to the Headteacher. Generally, the CBM attends the meeting on the Headteacher's behalf, and the meetings occur termly in order to monitor the contract.

In addition to this, the CBM has assisted the Headteacher in setting up a tendering process to recruit a Clerk to Governors. Now the Clerk to Governors is in post, the CBM meets her to monitor the Clerk's performance and keep abreast of any issues. The role is seen as part of the overall MAT status project, which is currently under discussion within the cluster.

Another of the larger projects has involved re-structuring staffing within the cluster's pre-school. Some of this work had commenced prior to the grant, however much of the monitoring and the

realisation of the benefits has been happening since September 2014, both with the advent of the new academic year and the CBMs commencing in the post.

Previously, the staff had all been employed on a part time basis. In order to rationalise this, and provide continuity for pupils and for parents, the school employed a full time Duty Manager and a Team leader. This also means that if a team member is on sick leave or training, either of those staff could fill in.

In addition, the pre-school had been employing the main school's SENCO on 0.1 FTE hours to provide SENCO support. Instead, the Team Leader has been up-skilled and the SENCO released back to the main school. This has meant a tangible saving in itself of £3,275.

The overall re-structuring has significantly reduced over-time costs which were paid previously to part-time staff who were then needed for additional hours. The CBM has calculated that this has saved around £13,000 in total, £2,000 of which has already been re-invested into resources for the pre-school. As the pre-school also received an 'Outstanding' status in May 2014, the cluster has been very keen to uphold this, and it is believed that this kind of move will aid that, both in terms of pupil learning, continuity of contact with parents and overall financial management.

Having the CBM in post has meant that the cluster has had a skilled individual to lead on these kinds of projects, which was a resource that had not previously been in place. In this case it has also meant that someone within the staff team has had the promotion opportunity, and gained valuable CPD. In addition, the role has saved significant Headteacher time, whereby much has been overseen by the CBM with Headteacher input and reciprocal updates. This is particularly important in the smaller schools where the Headteacher has a significant teaching commitment.