

## St Columb

### Theme 13: Multi-site working (see also GLF for multi-site working)

The Cluster SBM at St Columb provided some initial background to the issues that the Primary Cluster Grant was going to address:

*'As a cluster SBM I met with the Headteachers of each school regularly to discuss and review issues. It became clear that there were issues with the Grounds SLA. We discussed it as a whole group and are now looking at re-drafting the specification and will be undertaking a procurement process for each of the schools within the partnership.'*

The cluster consists of 3 standalone and 2 sponsored Academies with around 1,600 pupils on roll. The schools are spread quite widely across St Austell, Newquay, Bodmin and Dawlish in Devon, and are all part of the Kernow Collaborative Trust. There is a strong background in school improvement but also in providing best value.

When talking to the Cluster SBM, this is what they had to say:

*'I have been working with 2 schools to convert to Academy status as well as working across the academies with a variety of foci for the year some of which are joint projects such as procurement of Cleaning and Grounds contracts, large building contracts for 2 of the academies and all of them require me to source external funding for various curriculum or premises developments within their settings.'*

*I am responsible for the Assistant Business Manager who has a key role in the procurement of contracts as well as setting up and supporting a new financial system in these academies. I have asked them to set up a contract management system so that we have a main tracking system within each of these academies with all up-to-date contracts and services that each academies uses.'*

*I am also using the services of my Premises Manager to set-up Property Compliance in schools where it is not currently in house, this will obviously have a significant financial saving to these schools.'*

*Since engaging in the SBM Cluster I have been actively involved in project managing 2 schools converting to academy status. This has taken up a huge part of my time and a role which was not planned when we originally became involved in the SBM Cluster. This however, provided a steep learning curve for me in my professional development.'*

*There was a need to become familiar with TUPE and Legal issues relating to the transfer of LA schools to Academies but also Co-operative Trusts to Academies. The transfers became complex with issues around land belonging to 2 schools and nurseries where the previous funding agreements hadn't been drawn up and therefore my involvement with solicitors went from none to a daily or weekly basis for 3 months!'*

The Cluster SBM also described the impact for the cluster, the schools within it and the pupils:

*'Staff morale has improved where I have been part of the re-structuring process as it has allowed staff to re-organise their roles so that they are more effective and has provided greater job satisfaction. Staff have developed in their roles and been given training on new financial management systems as when as a new payroll system.'*

Efficiency has been largely through procurement of services such as:

Legal, HR, H & S, Payroll, Finance Systems, Accountants – estimated savings here are in the region of £10-12,000.

Other savings will come through the Cleaning and Grounds Contract which are currently being procured – estimated savings could be in the region of £5-10,000. I have been successful in some external bids which have amounted to £56,000 and an interest free loan of £8,000.

All Headteachers agree that it has saved them a lot of time and money in jobs that they would have to do if I wasn't doing it for them.

When we asked them what their key learning points have been, they said:

*'Advice I would give – pace yourself – don't try and do all things at once and be realistic when stating timescales for particular projects.'*

Clearly this example shows just how much a SBM can do in schools, and how much financial savings they can make, how they can generate income, save time to other staff, and bolster staff morale during challenging times within the school system.