



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# Teaching schools: the school perspective

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## Overview of teaching schools

Teaching schools are outstanding schools working with other schools to provide excellent training and development to new and experienced school staff. First designated in 2011, teaching schools are central to the government initiative to empower schools to raise standards by developing a self-improving and sustainable school-led system. They do this through forming alliances with supported schools and strategic partners who help to deliver aspects of training and development.

As the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and the Teaching Schools Council (TSC) look to recruit the next round of teaching schools, this report aims to provide examples of the impact teaching schools have had across the country, highlighting areas of outstanding practice.

## **Bitterne Park School (Bitterne Park Teaching School Alliance)**

The Bitterne Park Teaching School Alliance (BPTS) is continually developing its initial teacher training (ITT) package and now offers a comprehensive choice of subjects to participants including English, Geography, Design and Technology and Economics. It has doubled its School Direct placements from 12 to 24 over the last year. The alliance has formed a strategic partnership with Southampton University, through which they have been able to develop a comprehensive School Direct training programme.

The BPTS has also recruited and trained Subject Specialist Mentors to help develop and train School Direct trainees. These have successfully played a part in extending the subject knowledge of the trainees accessing this support.

As a result of this ongoing work to develop its initial teacher training, 100% of the School Direct trainees are consistently teaching lessons that are Good or better and 100% of the trainees went on to secure teaching positions.

In addition to its ITT work Bitterne Park has also had an impact through its Succession Planning and Talent Management (SPTM) and School to School Support work. Its SPTM work has seen a focus on the training and development of middle leaders both within and outside of the alliance. This has been through formal training and conferences as well as CPD in preparation for Ofsted visits. As a result of its work in this area, five middle leaders from alliance schools successfully gained promotions to senior leadership positions during the 2013-14 academic year and a further two Middle Leaders are seeking promotion and are being mentored to prepare them for interview.

Through its school to school support programme the alliance has provided support to a number of schools. This includes Regents Park Community College where Bitterne Park's Executive Head has provided NLE support, she is also now Executive Head at Regents Park. Learning Walks, conferences for middle management, coaching, peer to peer support, targeted teacher training and support during Ofsted visits have also been part of the support package. As a result of this support the Community College has seen itself move from an Ofsted category in July 2013 to Good at its last inspection in November 2014. The latest inspection saw an improvement to Good across all areas: Leadership and Management, Behaviour and Safety of Children, Quality of Teaching and Achievement of Pupils. The support from Bitterne Park and appointment of the Executive Head is specifically cited in the most recent Ofsted report as playing a crucial part in the improvements at Regents Park.

## **Tidemill Academy (Endeavour Teaching School Alliance)**

Comprising four member schools and five strategic partners as part of its strategic alliance Endeavour Teaching School Alliance (ETSA) has established a strong partnership and has worked with REAch2 (a primary only academy trust) to support schools outside of the alliance.

Nine SLEs have been deployed and support brokered by the alliance includes supporting the set-up of a brand new academy; Robert Fitzroy academy which opened in September 2012 with 120 pupils and was rated Good by Ofsted in July 2014. By training staff in how to produce provision maps, SLEs established clear systems to track and make provision for children with special educational needs.

A number of SLEs and mentors have also supported Eastbrook Primary in Brighton as part of a team of five practitioners. The team planned whole staff meetings which monitored practices in questioning and assessment and provided opportunities for feedback. As part of their support teachers who had been identified as requiring improvement were supported, including on a one to one basis and during PPA on planning and assessment as well as providing feedback from lesson observations. Following this support, at their last section 8 inspection the school was making good progress towards moving out of Special Measures. There is also Good and some Outstanding teaching from those who received support and reading, writing and maths level 4 results for Key Stage 2 have improved from 59% in 2012 to 85% in 2014 . The school converted to Eastbrook Primary Academy in September 2013.

## **Histon and Impington / Swavesey Village College (Cambridge Teaching Schools Network)**

Histon and Impington have a well developed strategy for succession planning and talent management to enable the progression and movement of future leaders through the Cambridge Teaching Schools Network (CTSN). To support this they have developed a 'tube map' of leadership development which identifies the journey individuals can take to progress within the network. The map sets out possible routes for developing from ITT right through to executive leadership, as well as in non teaching areas, and the activities undertaken at each stage. Much like an authentic tube map, the map also shows where certain activities bridge across more than one area, like a tube station with more than one line running through it.

This approach to talent management and succession planning has created capacity across primary and secondary phases to enable professional development and secondments across the network. Two secondments have been appointed on to leadership teams which has the benefit of minimal cost in back filling staffing and has freed up senior leaders to focus on teaching school work. The network has also created capacity by seconding three members of staff to other academies to drive forward improvement and Histon and Impington themselves have taken on a seconded member of staff in order to develop their experience and leadership capability.

As a result of their succession planning strategy six leaders were promoted to senior leadership positions in September 2013 to respond to need.

## Sheringham Community Primary School (Sheringham Teaching School Alliance)

The Sheringham Teaching School Alliance (STSA) has worked with its Local Authority (LA) to target its work and develop future leaders and retain existing ones. It has a number of SPTM initiatives in place which have had an impact across the alliance.

The alliance has worked closely with Norfolk LA to identify and develop leadership potential through the Primary Leadership Talent Pool. The programme targets teachers from the local authority who aspire to become senior school leaders or headteachers within three years. STSA contributes annually by hosting interns for three days and has recently facilitated aspects of the programme.

The alliance has seen consistent growth in its participants' progression. As a result of the Talent Pool and delivery of NPQML and NPQSL 76% of participants have gained a next stage promotion, this is a rise of 22% since 2012. 38% have progressed from middle to senior leadership positions, a rise of 10% since 2012, and 36% of participants have progressed to headship, a rise of 13% since 2012.

The alliance has also designed and delivered The Head Teacher Support Programme (HSP). The programme was designed to strengthen headteachers so that they are able to provide strong and confident leadership and effectively model quality leadership for the next generation. The programme includes an option of support from system leaders to embed learning and moderate judgements in the delegate's own school. Places are funded both by Norfolk LA for schools of concern and by schools individually buying the programme. As a result of the programme 83% of the schools in HSP Cohort 1 inspected since accessing the programme have been graded Good.

The Sheringham TSA is also more widely involved in Regional Succession Planning. It works with the 'Fens and Coastal' sub-regional succession planning group, comprising LA Officers and teaching school representatives from Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Peterborough and Norfolk. The STSA led a pilot project with a local cluster of schools to develop the use of a talent management and leadership development self-evaluation tool. The purpose of this initiative was to determine areas of strong practice and areas for improvement in each school and across each partnership and to then support shared development. As a result of this pilot, the self-evaluation tool is now being used by 30 Norfolk primary schools as part of a strategy to improve the quality of leadership at all levels in Good and Outstanding schools.

## **Tuxford Academy (Trent Valley Teaching School Alliance)**

Tuxford Academy in the East Midlands is an 11-18 academy with a low percentage of Free School Meals (FSM) on roll. The academy has worked with several other schools with a higher percentage of FSM pupils. In particular Holgate Academy (formerly Holgate Comprehensive) which has 17.5% of pupils receiving FSM.

Following Holgate Comprehensive's rating as Inadequate in 2012, Tuxford Academy supported the school in its conversion to an academy. Support was provided by the NLE, fully inducting Holgate's head teacher and ensuring a full and appropriate support plan, approved by HMI Ofsted, has been put in place. This has resulted in improvements in student progress, quality of teaching, behaviour of students and quality of governance.

As a result of the school to school support provided by Tuxford, Holgate's five A\* - C grades in English and Maths increased by 17% from 40% in 2012 to 57% in 2013 and 2014. The overall number of five A\* - C grades increased from 39% in 2012 to 55% in 2014. There has also been a 20% improvement in Good or Better lessons.

In addition, Tuxford has made a significant difference to the standards at Thrumpton Primary school, one of its alliance members, with a focus on increasing standards of numeracy. Staff received feedback from lesson observations and took part in learning walks. CPD in numeracy was also provided in a number of ways including at staff meetings and problem solving days. In Level 4 reading writing and maths at key stage 2, Thrumpton has improved from below the floor threshold, 53% in 2013 to 86% in 2014. In May 2014 Thrumpton was rated as Good by Ofsted, having previously been rated as Requires Improvement in January 2013.

## The Rochester Grammar (New Horizons Teaching School Alliance)

The Rochester Grammar school (RGS) is the lead school for the New Horizons TSA (NHTSA) based in the South East. It has been involved in supporting a number of schools within the region, including the deployment of NLE and SLE support to the Chatham Grammar School for Boys, which was placed in Special Measures in September 2013. Funding has been used to deploy support at a senior leadership level to deploy RGS' Executive Head for support as well as the principal for three days a week.

SLE support in English and Science saw the Controlled assessments improve by one grade per pupil. The number of A\*- C GCSE grades in English and Maths GCSE achieving A\*- C have remained high at the school at 95%. The school has also seen a significant improvement in teaching in learning with 70% of lessons being judged Good or better in March 2014, this is up from 30% in October 2013. In addition the NHTSA provided an NQT Induction programme for the relevant staff resulting in 100 % of NQTs being successfully accredited and retained within teaching and 75 % retained within Chatham Grammar School for Boys. The school were also allowed to continue to recruit NQTs while in Special Measures.

In the school's February 2014 monitoring visit section 8 report, access to best practice and support from the TSA was cited as playing a part in improved performance. The school also received an improved rating of Good at their HMI inspection in September 2014. Behaviour and safety at the school has also improved from Requires Improvement to Good.

## **The Fallibroome Academy & Mottram St Andrew Primary Academy (Silk teaching school alliance)**

Within the Silk TSA a broad range of Continued Professional Development (CPD) is offered, which combines nationally recognised programmes with a more bespoke, locally developed offer. The alliance has invested in the training of accredited facilitators for national courses such as the Improving Teaching Programme, Investors in Excellence programme and first level Cooperative Learning training. Similarly, the TSA is on the board of the Outstanding Leaders' Partnership and the alliance has accredited facilitators for National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders (NPQSL) and National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders (NPQML).

The Silk TSA has worked to shape its CPD offer in response to local need and the profile of the schools within the alliance itself. For example the TSA developed a three day Exploring Outstanding course which is specifically aimed at a cross-phase audience to promote greater dissemination of expertise between primary and secondary colleagues. Participants watch live sessions and receive feedback on teaching and learning to ensure they are applying their learning in their own context. Feedback on the programme has reported that delegates' lesson observations have improved from Good to Outstanding and one delegate has gone on to be appointed as a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE), citing the Exploring Outstanding programme as the foot up to applying for the role.

The Silk alliance has tracked a sample of delegates over the medium term. One school which had recently received a judgement of Requires Improvement from Ofsted sent three delegates on ITP. The school has since moved to an Ofsted judgement of Good and the headteacher reports that the three delegates are maintaining the improvements made.

The alliance places great emphasis and value in joint practice development, subsequently they have established a number of project groups targeting the key improvement areas of alliance schools. These include Level 6 in Mathematics, Primary National Curriculum development; subject specific groups e.g. Maths, MFL and the Arts; small scale action research projects, SEN clusters for teachers and teaching assistants and a locally designed and delivered course aimed at inspiring colleagues to consider senior leadership positions.

Feedback from the joint practice development groups is monitored regularly, resulting in summative reports on impact. In the Level 6 in Mathematics group, 100% of participating students met their FFT(d) target with 72% exceeding it. 60% of the target group of students achieved Level 6 in the key stage 2 SATS. This project has subsequently led to the development of a shared calculation policy across a number of primary and secondary schools which has led to improved planning and transition arrangements.

For the subject focused clusters for SEN and MFL, the reach of these has grown each year to reach more staff in a wider range of schools. Areas of need have been identified and then targeted using expertise from within the alliance and beyond. Cross-phase work has been ongoing looking at the use of phonics in MFL and how to prepare for enhanced provision of MFL in the primary phase and the impact on transition. Over 40 secondary teaching assistants regularly attend the network training sessions and, to meet further identified need, the alliance has run specialist days targeting autism and Mathematics interventions, particularly Numicon. The latter has helped establish a team of staff in one secondary school who are skilled in this intervention and are therefore able to be deployed under the direction of a teacher to support statemented children who were operating below Level 3 to access the curriculum. These targeted students have made significant improvements in attainment. This includes one student whose class teacher and teaching assistants were trained in Numicon. On entry he was at the lowest P levels, he is now in year 9 and attaining a level 3b consistently. A second student joined the school in year 8 with a level 2c in Mathematics and again, had extensive intervention from his teacher and teaching assistants. He is now in year 9 and has progressed to level 4c.

## Swiss Cottage School Development and Research Centre (Swiss Cottage Teaching School Alliance)

Swiss Cottage has undertaken a broad range of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) activity in its role as a Teaching School. It has forged strong links with key partners to enhance the understanding of and ability to teach in a SEND environment. Over 500 teachers will have engaged in SEND ITT workshops and learning activities this academic year.

During 2012-13 Swiss Cottage and partner schools piloted the SEN School Experience Framework (SENSE week). This involved hosting PGCE students for one week in a SEN setting, providing workshops, classroom experience, opportunities for reflection and mentoring. This intensive week gave the PGCE and SCITT trainees were given the opportunity to look at preparations for the new code of practice and the use of pupil centred technologies. 90 trainees from two HEIs benefited from this opportunity.

The alliance has worked with several HEIs including the Institute of Education (IoE) and Middlesex University to embed the SEN School Experience Framework into their ITT programmes. Alongside this the alliance has worked with two strategic partners to develop a new programme "21st Century Teaching Assistant". This is designed to meet the needs of both special and mainstream settings. The alliance has developed both this programme and the IoE embedded SEN School Experience Framework as a way of building the wealth of Department for Education SEN resources, and the Complex Needs resource bank, into training frameworks with the objective of supporting trainees and making these more accessible. In addition to this Swiss Cottage has also supported the development of the NASEN SEND Gateway to provide access to SEND resources.

To further enhance its SEN offer, Swiss Cottage approached the Institute of Education with a proposal to co-develop a practice based Masters in Teaching SEN that would meet the needs of Alliances to offer SEN professional learning. The first two year long modules (30 credits) focused on Developing Professional Enquiry Skills, therefore embedding research skills into ITT and CPD. In the first year, the course had seven participants from three schools. 85% passed the course (one having suffered with ill health), 43% of these received a distinction. Five of the candidates went on to take the full Masters qualification. In the second year, 2014-15, the course has grown to 12 participants from seven schools, from across both mainstream and SEN schools. The Masters has deepened understanding and application of inclusive pedagogy for early career developers, bridging the professional learning continuum from ITT through to NQT.

If you are a teaching school and have an impact story you'd like to share, please contact the Teaching Schools Team at [teaching.schools@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:teaching.schools@education.gsi.gov.uk)

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