



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Impact of Teaching Schools

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Contents

Overview of teaching schools	3
Initial teacher training	6
Continuing professional development and leadership development.....	8
Succession planning and talent management	10
School-to-school support.....	13
Specialist leaders of education.....	15
Research and development.....	17

Overview of teaching schools

This section aims to provide a brief overview of five teaching schools, highlighting their practice across six main areas of the teaching school role.

The Arthur Terry School Alliance (led by The Arthur Terry School)

The Arthur Terry School in Sutton Coldfield is at the centre of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, a multi-academy trust of six schools including Stockland Green School (moved from 'satisfactory' in 2008 to 'good' in 2010) and Mere Green Community Primary School (was in Special Measures with KS2 SATs results below national floor targets; now judged as having 94% 'good' or 'outstanding' teaching).

Arthur Terry was designated as a teaching school in July 2011 and leads a cross-phase alliance of 28 schools across the West Midlands (Birmingham, Solihull, Staffordshire and Walsall). A number of alliance partner schools have been supported to improve such as St Michaels CofE Primary and Kingshurst Academy, both of which have recently moved from Ofsted 'satisfactory' to 'good'. At Kingshurst, specific support in maths has led to significant improvements in the space of a year, with an increase from 40% to 80% in the percentage of maths teaching considered 'good' or 'outstanding', and an increase from 50% to 75% of pupils achieving A*- C maths GCSE.

Arthur Terry gained accreditation as a SCITT in May 2012. In 2012-13 all trainees were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' and the former Teaching Agency described the programme as an "innovative approach to training which is proving to be very effective". For 2013-14, Arthur Terry recruited 55 trainees onto SCITT or School Direct routes, including a newly developed primary pathway.

The alliance holds licenses to deliver NCTL and Olevi programmes and has also developed bespoke programmes for middle leaders ('Leading Change') and aspiring headteachers ('Aspire to Headship') in collaboration with HTI and Birmingham City University.

LTS Alliance (led by Latchmere School)

Latchmere is a community primary school with over 800 pupils in Kingston upon Thames. It was designated as a teaching school in March 2012 and has 12 alliance partners.

In 2012-13, in partnership with Kingston University, Latchmere supported 24 PGCE students, 98% of whom have since secured employment. The alliance has also developed a School Direct training programme which began in September 2013 for 14 secondary students and two primary salaried trainees.

In response to local demand for professional development to support improvements in level 6 reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, the alliance delivered training in partnership with the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) 26 teachers attended from 12 local primary schools. Responses from attending schools suggest that 93% of children have achieved level 4 or better in the grammar, spelling and punctuation tests. As a result Latchmere delivered eight similar courses in autumn 2013 as well as designing a flexible NQT training programme.

The alliance has also developed a Year 3 and 4 arithmetic network in collaboration with the

National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), with eight local schools engaging in teacher subject knowledge improvement. Evaluation indicates an average increase in point score of 0.3 in maths across the network's Year 3 and 4 classes.

Latchmere has designated and deployed eight Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) this year with outstanding feedback. Two supported 'good' teachers have improved to 'outstanding' and one failing student achieved an 'outstanding' placement after SLE input. In collaboration with the South West London School Effectiveness Partnership (SWLSEP), Latchmere has also supported the Aspiring to Headship programme, through which 48 future leaders have been identified and developed over the past year.

Transformative Learning Alliance (led by The Wroxham School)

The Wroxham School is a one-form entry primary academy with nursery in Hertfordshire. It was reaffirmed as 'outstanding' by Ofsted in May 2013. Wroxham was designated as a teaching school in July 2011 and its alliance comprises of 50 primary and secondary schools, including all local schools in Borehamwood and Potters Bar.

Wroxham is the Appropriate Body for primary NQTs across the alliance. By September 2014, the alliance will be supporting and mentoring 20 School Direct and SCITT trainees. The alliance also offers a range of professional learning opportunities, with key areas of focus over the past year being primary mathematics, leadership and language for learning.

Research and development is a core focus for the alliance. Research study groups have been established for headteachers and senior leaders. Six schools have engaged with a lesson study project in partnership with the National Teacher Enquiry Network (NTEN).

Intensive support for schools is brokered by the teaching school and is delivered through a combination of coaching, SLE support, ongoing professional learning and engagement with research. Since September 2012, the five primary schools receiving the most intensive support have all improved in terms of Ofsted judgements, with two moving from 'serious weaknesses' to 'good' and three from 'satisfactory' to 'good'. In addition, three other primary headteachers previously considering resignation have remained in post following sustained coaching support.

Ashton on Mersey Alliance (led by Ashton on Mersey School)

Ashton on Mersey School, a secondary academy in Sale with almost 1500 pupils, became a teaching school in July 2011. Ashton has consistently improved outcomes for children year on year from 2009 to 2012 and was judged by Ofsted in 2013 as 'outstanding' in all areas. Students join the school with broadly average attainment and go on to achieve outstandingly well. As a teaching school, Ashton works with over 40 schools.

Ashton offers over 100 ITT places per year in partnership with several universities, in addition to leading a School Direct programme for 30 trainees and supporting more than 60 PGCE block placements. A pilot School Direct programme in 2012/13 was a great success, with all trainees judged as being at least 'good' and two thirds as 'outstanding'. All trainees secured employment within Ashton's alliance. Other ITT projects include a new primary PE specialist programme (supported by the Olympic Legacy), a maths specialist programme which has led to an 11% increase in A* to C maths GCSE grades, and Ashton's own 'Journey to Outstanding' programme which enables trainees to work closely with outstanding teachers. To support all of this 70% of Ashton's teaching staff are trained mentors.

School-to-school support is another strength, with NLEs and SLEs across the alliance supporting underperforming schools. For example, Ashton's sponsorship of Forest Gate Primary school led to an increase of 50% increase of pupils achieving Level 4+ in Key Stage 2 English and maths, from 29% (2011) to 79% (2012). Forest Gate now has no significant attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils and 90% of teaching is 'good' or 'outstanding'.

A focus on professional development has seen Ashton create the SLE professional development programme, supporting other teaching schools to train nearly 2000 SLEs nationally; deliver the Improving Teaching Programme (ITP) and Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) to 450 teaching staff across 150 schools to improve their teaching; supporting 65 aspirant headteachers as a lead delivery partner for the new licensed National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH); and deliver National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML) and National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) to over 100 participants.

South Farnham Teaching School Alliance (led by South Farnham Teaching School)

South Farnham School in Surrey is a primary academy with almost 750 pupils. The school consistently achieves excellent results, with 100% of pupils having achieved Level 4 or above in English and maths each year from 2009 to 2012. The academy became a teaching school in July 2011 and works with over 50 partner schools.

Since becoming a teaching school, South Farnham has become an accredited provider of ITT and has led the delivery of 60 teacher training places increasing to 90 in 2014/15 across its alliance, including School Direct provision.

South Farnham also has a strong track record in school to school improvement, for example providing NLE and SLE support to Godalming Junior School to develop teaching practice and differentiation in the classroom. Within one year the school was judged by Ofsted to have moved from requiring 'special measures' to 'good' in all areas.

South Farnham School has collaborated with a number of other teaching schools to create the cross-phase Surrey Teaching Schools Network, which provides NCTL accredited leadership programmes NPQML, NPQSL and NPQH. The network has already supported over 280 middle and senior leaders to develop, including more than 20 NPQH graduates.

Initial teacher training

SPELL - Southern Partnership for Excellence in Leadership and Learning (led by Ringwood School)

Ringwood is an 11-19 academy close to the New Forest in Hampshire. The schools in this alliance have successfully filled 100% of their School Direct places with high calibre candidates.

Ringwood recruited three trainees in 2012-13 as part of the national School Direct pilot. All of them successfully completed their training year through a PGCE programme and are now employed across Ringwood's teaching school partnership. Of the three trainees that completed the programme, two were graded 'outstanding' for teaching and learning and one was graded as 'very good'.

For 2013-14, Ringwood has been working with six alliance schools to create a bespoke School Direct programme that compliments existing provision offered by Southampton University, with whom they have a very strong partnership. Recruitment has been highly successful. Filling their original places by February, Ringwood were able to request further places and quickly fill those as well. In total, 13 secondary and two primary places were filled. The quality of applicants was good, with 60% having a 2:1 degree classification or higher, allowing for the best trainees to be recruited.

In addition to successfully developing new School Direct programmes, the Ringwood and Bransgore alliance has continued to take a lead role in SCITT provision. Bransgore successfully trained 30 SCITT students in 2012-13, all of whom have now been employed, with 67% graded 'outstanding' and 23% 'good' for teaching and learning. The alliance also includes the Poole primary SCITT which has trained a further 30 primary teachers over the year, and supports a local secondary SCITT by providing placements for maths, modern foreign language and design and technology trainees.

Harton Teaching School Alliance (led by Harton Technology College)

For its School Direct programme in 2013-14, Harton Technology College is leading a partnership of two primary and four secondary schools, offering 13 places (eight fee-paying and five salaried). The majority will focus on particular subjects, including English, mathematics, physics, modern foreign languages and physical education. For 2014-15 the partnership is expanding and has requested 28 School Direct places.

An identified team of mentors from across the partnership has been trained, giving many teachers the chance to develop confidence, mentoring and leadership skills. Harton is also leading in using SLEs to develop its School Direct provision, with training sessions throughout the year being planned and delivered by alliance SLEs with different areas of expertise. For the partnership's primary programme, a primary SLE with expertise in initial teacher training has been deployed to co-plan and facilitate the training. The SLE supports a collaborative working party of six primary headteachers, ensuring that commitment and workload is shared.

Harton employs an SLE as dedicated training manager. Her role has been to plan the training programme, ensuring that not only do trainees receive excellent provision but that

outstanding practice at Harton is further developed and embedded. She is also able to spend time building relationships with the various partners, identifying the needs of particular schools, universities and mentors and ensuring all those involved are fully informed and committed to the training. She has led workshops for SLEs in the north of England, providing advice on how they can lead the development of School Direct.

To further increase capacity and reach, Harton has collaborated with four other local teaching schools to host teaching and learning conferences for School Direct trainees. These innovative events will be planned and delivered by school leaders across the various alliances, ensuring that trainee teachers are able to draw on experience and expertise from across the wider teaching school network.

Tudor Grange Academy Solihull (led by Tudor Grange Academy)

Tudor Grange is an 11-18 comprehensive academy in Solihull with over 1200 pupils. It established a SCITT in 2012. In 2012-13, it accredited eight full-time, fee-paying students, through practical hands-on training within particular school departments, with the added benefit of 60 Masters credits awarded by the University of Cumbria. The majority of the training this year took place within Tudor Grange, with two placements during the year at partner schools and academies, including a focus on SEND and behaviour management. In 2013-14, six partner schools will take on a delivery role.

The school-based programme has enabled trainees to make sustained progress throughout the year, with continuity and immediate links between training sessions and classroom practice. Trainees were able to implement their learning with little or no delay, following a constant cycle of research, implementation, feedback, reflection and action planning. Equally importantly, the SCITT was able to quickly and flexibly respond to trainees' changing needs, extending placements and providing additional support for individuals where needed. All trainees were evaluated as at least 'good' and secured employment, the majority within the alliance.

At Tudor Grange all SCITT provision is delivered by professionals with current teaching roles, drawing from up-to-date personal experience. Teachers have developed facilitation skills and new middle and senior leadership roles have been introduced with responsibility for designing subject-specific training and overseeing trainee progress. The ITT partnership has acted as a catalyst for partner schools to take an increasing role in teaching school delivery, with staff involved in coaching, development programmes and INSET delivery across the alliance.

Through masters level study, trainees developed an understanding of key research methods, triggering an increase in action research across the alliance. Teachers at different levels are now engaged in research into areas such as modern foreign language development, lesson study and specialist delivery in feeder primary schools. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that having trainees in school throughout the year has supported existing staff to develop their own teaching practice, through an ongoing exchange of techniques and ideas between trainees and teachers. Working closely with trainees has re-inspired and energised experienced staff.

Continuing professional development and leadership development

Plymouth Teaching School Alliance (led by High View Primary School and Prince Rock Primary School)

Plymouth Teaching School alliance has 69 members from all over Plymouth, including primaries, secondaries and two universities.

The alliance launched its first professional development provision in September 2012, open to all schools in the area. Since then, a self-evaluation audit tool has been developed to identify the needs within the alliance. Schools have agreed to complete the audit and share their results. Consequently, the alliance can now be proactive in determining potential areas of need. This knowledge is used to produce a termly brochure detailing a range of courses aimed to support newly qualified teachers, established teachers, teaching assistants, middle and senior leaders and headteachers. These include bespoke programmes created by the schools as well as courses offered by external organisations and provision accredited by NCTL, such as NPQH or the outstanding teacher programme (OTP). The alliance is licensed by NCTL to provide these programmes.

Drawing on the expertise of alliance schools, commissioned consultants, universities and other providers, a wide range of provision is offered for teachers and leaders in all phases, ranging from courses on Ofsted and Raise Online, to NPQH, NPQML, and NPQSL. In summer 2013 for example, primary courses focused on maths teaching and extension to level six; the new expectations for grammar; and teaching early writing and vocabulary development.

The alliance is quick to ensure that its continuing professional development (CPD) offer is current, relevant and focused, such as preparing for the new science curriculum, the effective use of pupil premium funding or understanding the implications of the new Ofsted framework.

The specific needs of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) across Plymouth are met by a variety of sessions, from understanding phonics to preparing for interviews. Investment in the city's support staff has also been a particular focus, with courses and learning walks for teaching assistants (TAs) becoming increasingly popular. Recent programmes looked at improving TAs' maths, developing their planning and assessment skills and helping them to create effective displays.

One of the largest and most successful Plymouth Teaching School CPD offers has been the provision of Language in Plymouth Schools (LIPS) – a pilot project involving 34 schools organised into six hubs. This focused on delivering whole school input in the Talk for Writing approach developed by Pie Corbett. The project engaged children, parents and teachers and involved research conducted by SLEs.

These courses and projects have contributed to work taking place across Plymouth Local Authority (LA) and the teaching school alliance's blended approach to school improvement has involved input from colleagues across the LA. These efforts have been rewarded. Plymouth LA has seen very significant impacts as a result; with maths and English results at levels 4 and 5 showing the best improvement in one year that the

LA has ever seen. For Key stage 1 the impact was just as big, with Plymouth LA seeing the best ever improvement and best results in reading and maths.

Furthermore, in 2012–13, out of 36 primary Ofsted inspections that took place, 83% were graded as 'outstanding' or 'good'; 15 had improved on their last inspection and 15 had maintained their grading (including two 'outstanding' and eight 'good'). In terms of performance, only three schools in the LA were considered to be below floor standards in 2012. This marked a significant improvement from 17 schools below floor standards in 2011.

The Griffin Teaching School Alliance (led by Lawrence Sheriff School)

Lawrence Sheriff, a grammar school for boys in Rugby, works with a group of schools drawn from a wide range of contexts. The alliance's CPD offer focuses on developing the quality of teaching and learning through bespoke training and mutual support. This emphasis is driven by feedback from schools within the alliance that highlight their areas of need. Courses and programmes include the improving and outstanding teacher programmes, NCTL's leadership programmes, as well as more specialised provision such as training in teaching GCSE Computing/Computer Science.

Lawrence Sherriff is also working with The Westwood Academy in Coventry to lead a professional development initiative called Partnership Plus, which has developed from a project originally created for Coventry secondary schools in 2000. The partnership is based on the idea of teachers from different schools undertaking and sharing practical, classroom-based action research, 38 participating schools from Coventry and Warwickshire now pay £1500 to join the partnership, which is directed by a strategic steering group. The joining fee is used to provide a CPD offer as well as to support networking events – for example, 300 education professionals attended a showcase conference earlier this year.

The partnership's development opportunities for teachers cover a range of issues and curriculum areas. The current CPD focus is on "Lesson Observation for Real" where a live lesson is taught in front of approx. 175 teachers. The lesson is observed and analysed by an accredited Ofsted Inspector and discussed by attendees, with a focus on where the learning is really happening. Each session is filmed and shared online with schools across the partnership, through a secure virtual learning environment. During 2012-13, lesson observation sessions were held in a number of different schools, encouraging an ethos of openness across the partnership as well as strengthening inter-school relationships.

Since designation as a teaching school, Lawrence Sheriff has been able to support the existing Partnership Plus network to expand significantly and there are now plans to reach out into the primary sector.

The core values of the Griffin Alliance, as well as the strategic direction of Partnership Plus, focus on collaboration and mutual respect, with courses and events badged collectively but delivered by different schools. Importantly, all schools are able to contribute to and gain from the provision, creating a strong, structured networked learning community. Dr Peter Kent, headteacher of Westwood Academy, believes that the programme relies entirely on feedback from colleagues, which requires 'the suspension of ego' to work effectively. This level of mutual trust has led to the programme's success and expansion.

Succession planning and talent management

The Compton-Barnet Alliance (led by The Compton School Specialist Technology College)

This north London alliance has made the development of future leaders a key priority, in order to ensure the sustainability of outstanding performance and high standards within its schools. To this end, the alliance has recently undertaken a project to develop a structured system for talent identification and management.

In 2012, a pilot group of five schools began by sharing and discussing strategies for evaluating staff performance and providing leadership development opportunities. Developing a mutual strategy for talent identification, they set up a Leadership Residency placement programme for current or aspiring senior leaders, whereby alliance partners sign up to host two leadership placements a year, between two and five days in duration. Participating leaders are matched to host schools through an application process, focusing on specific areas for development, with a post-placement presentation to their host headteacher on their learning about school leadership.

By June 2013, 18 senior leaders within the alliance had undertaken Leadership Residency placements across 13 different schools. Evaluations were extremely positive, with many feeling it was the best and most impactful CPD they had experienced. This is being followed with a group self-review training session, access to extended placements within the network and individual leadership coaching.

As well as the Leadership Residency programme, the pilot group undertook extensive work to develop guidance for staff on core leadership characteristics. Influenced by a range of sources, from NCTL diagnostics to the John Lewis Partnership's leadership model, the alliance has created a "behaviours for leadership" framework. This explicitly explains the behaviors' expected from effective leaders in partnership schools. The framework has been embedded through a range of approaches including one-to-one sessions with staff, senior team reviews of individual team members, self-audit and 360-degree reviews. In addition, a range of other resources have been trialed collectively, including a career surgery model and the development of a talent identification database which contains details of future leaders across the alliance. Feedback from staff on these approaches has been extremely positive: "Having completed the leadership behaviors' 360, it really helped me think about leadership in a different way and hone in on areas I need to develop" (Louise Taylor, Deputy Head, The Compton School).

The alliance plans to continue the Leadership Residency programme, opening it up to middle leaders as well as potential heads, and intends to develop a bursary scheme to enable targeted staff to access wider leadership development provision. This scheme has been a pilot in 2013 and the project has been successful enough to continue for a further two years and beyond, following which thorough evaluation of the project will take place.

Ebor Teaching School Alliance (led by Manor CE Academy and Robert Wilkinson Primary Schools)

As part of a collaborative succession planning strategy, originally developed across the Yorkshire and Humber region, The Ebor Alliance has been working with four other teaching school alliances (Wickersley, Aspire, Birth to 19 and the North East alliance) to establish the Emerging Academy Leaders Programme.

The programme is aimed at highly talented middle leaders and senior leaders, identified as having the potential to take on vice-principal or principal roles as their next career step, in both sponsored and convertor academies. Participating academies and multi-academy trusts each put forward up to three emerging leaders, as well as helping to facilitate the programme. The programme has recently been expanded into the North East region, through a 'train the trainer' model. For 2012-13, 12 teachers took part in the programme, two of these have already gained promotion and with a 90% completion rate for the course, more promotions are expected over the next academic year.

The Emerging Academy Leaders Programme is run over three terms and incorporates self-audit, 360-degree feedback and individual mentoring from an academy principal. Key to the programme is practical experience through school-based working and simulated leadership situations. Participants experience contrasting environments through work shadowing visits to other academies, work through realistic problem solving activities to address academy-wide challenges and lead a whole-school project. At the end of the programme, participants undertake an authentic interview process for a senior leadership or principal role in an academy - a residential experience held at NCTL in Nottingham. In 2013-14 the programme will run with 28 participants from primary and secondary academies.

Forest Way Teaching School Alliance (led by Forest Way School)

Forest Way is a special school in North West Leicestershire, designated as a teaching school in July 2011. The alliance comprises of 39 schools including six special schools, a special nursery, 26 primary schools and six secondary schools, representing 10,000 pupils in total. The alliance is extremely inclusive and outward facing, facilitating the East Midlands teaching schools alliance network and the national special teaching schools' network as well as a local SENCo network.

As part of a successful project over the past year, the alliance has been supporting 30 aspiring leaders using the talent management quality mark. These individuals were identified across the alliance through in-school audits and discussion with CPD coordinators. Participants attended an initial meeting to identify their specific needs and were then given the opportunity to shadow or to receive career coaching from a leader at the appropriate level in another school, providing a tailored approach for each individual. Since the inception of the programme, seven participants have already secured promotions to leadership positions within the alliance. Following on from this project, coaching support has also been provided for three middle leaders, one of whom has now secured a senior leadership role.

Forest Way also has a key role in talent development through its coordination of the Leicestershire SENCo network. Tailored professional development is offered in a wide range of areas such as support for looked after children, autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia, Makaton and low incidence SEND. A conference for SENCos and special school

teachers held in October 2013 is intended to become an annual event.

The alliance's talent development work starts at the very beginning of a teacher's career. In 2012-13 the alliance supported 50 PGCE students from four East Midlands universities (Derby, Leicester, Loughborough and Northampton) by facilitating placements across 12 outstanding special schools, preceded by a detailed workshop for trainees and school-based mentors to agree the placement focus. Evaluations were very positive with trainees reporting an improvement in their knowledge in assessment, planning, differentiation, team work, communication and behaviour.

School-to-school support

Lightwoods Teaching School Alliance (led by Lightwoods Primary School)

The Lightwoods alliance has developed a model of school-to-school support for seven schools, most of which had new headteachers and/or needed to move their school forward to ensure at least a 'good' Ofsted outcome. The schools have created a joint action plan, based on individual and joint needs. Where appropriate, individual support is provided by identified NLEs and LLEs to develop leadership capacity and support the raising of standards.

This bespoke support has been complemented by a range of other provision offered through the teaching school. This has included courses on 'what does outstanding look like' and 'moving from satisfactory to good', incorporating school shadowing visits. Additionally, senior leaders from the schools have undertaken training around analysing data, staff profiling, school evaluation and improvement planning. Training has also been provided for support staff to develop their role in supporting classroom learning.

Schools have benefited from targeted support for senior leaders, SENCOs, teachers and support staff. Particular positive aspects have been the opportunities to visit schools, undertake joint training and observe and shadow quality teaching and learning. Good and outstanding teachers from all schools in the partnership were 'catalogued' as a resource to support modeling and mentoring experiences.

All schools are now collating data in order to measure impact, and this will be analysed in autumn 2013. The project is expected to have led to increased pupil progress, attainment and achievement as well as an increase in 'good' and 'outstanding' teaching and more effective use of support staff. An early review was undertaken in April 2013 and headteachers reported positively on the enthusiasm of teachers who had engaged. Across the group, it was felt that the percentage of 'good' teaching had increased and a number of schools were already able to pinpoint improvements in outcomes for children, with one school reporting a 30% increase in the percentage of children achieving two sub-levels of progress.

Plymouth Teaching School Alliance (led by High View Primary School and Prince Rock Primary School)

In its first year of designation as a teaching school, High View's initial priority was to address the immediate improvement needs of 19 Plymouth primary schools that were below 'floor target' in spring 2012. The local schools' forum allocated funding to the alliance to develop a support programme.

An early success was the development of a self-evaluation audit tool, which was well received by a large number of schools. Significantly, the schools agreed to share the results of their audits, establishing a data sharing protocol and beginning to develop a culture of joint practice development. A range of school data is now shared, which enables the alliance to anticipate and be proactive in addressing potential concerns, in partnership with the local authority.

Building an infrastructure of support required the commitment of 'outstanding' leaders and teachers from across Plymouth to work beyond their own schools and classrooms. Within

the alliance, six NLEs, nine LLEs and 26 SLEs have been designated. The teaching school also deploys several trained Ofsted inspectors and has designated ten of its own Plymouth Lead Educators (PLEs) to act as 'apprentices' to the more experienced SLEs, thus building capacity for the future. All of these professionals have worked across schools providing strategic support at teacher and leadership level, as well as delivering CPD, undertaking action research and creating a School Direct programme model. As a result of the alliance's work, out of the 19 schools below the 'floor target' in April 2012, 17 were brought above this level by July 2012.

Carmel Teaching School Alliance (led by Carmel College)

Carmel College is an 11-18 comprehensive academy with a diverse intake of 1260 students admitted from 22 schools across the authority. Over a quarter of the pupils are from the most deprived areas of the country. Since becoming a teaching school in April 2012, standards have risen further and in 2013, 95% of pupils achieved 5 A* to C at GCSE including English and maths with no significant gaps in performance between groups of pupils. Carmel has recently become a multi-academy trust.

The alliance is receiving increasing requests for support from other schools. A recent example was the provision of support to a school given 'notice to improve' in April 2012. Carmel provided significant support through the deployment of an NLE, senior staff and SLEs from across the alliance, implementing a new curriculum and staffing structure and markedly improving the quality of teaching. The supported school moved out of category in July 2013 with over 70% of teaching observed by Ofsted being judged 'good' or better.

School to school support creates learning and development opportunities for staff, whether through deployment roles or through facilitating CPD. For example, staff across the trust will be involved in Carmel's new venture as a science learning partner with the Science Learning Centre in Sheffield and Durham. All outstanding practitioners are involved in developing and delivering training, including NCTLs licensed leadership provision and recently a 'Women into Headship' course for 21 attendees. Carmel has also used initial teacher training to help other schools to develop. As an accredited ITT provider since 2004, the school has worked with a large number of partner schools, many of which have now become lead schools with their own School Direct clusters.

Specialist leaders of education

Pioneer Teaching School Alliance (led by Harrison Primary School)

The Pioneer Teaching School Alliance primarily covers the Fareham and Gosport area of Hampshire. Harrison Primary was one of the first ten teaching schools chosen to deliver the core training for SLEs, and as a result, heads and deputies from across the alliance have been trained as facilitators.

In addition to training SLEs from other alliances, Pioneer currently has 18 SLEs working in primary, secondary and special schools. The need for Pioneer's own 18 SLEs was identified by reviewing the deployment requests from the DfE and self-referred requests for support from schools. All SLE deployments are carefully matched to schools in need of support, and begin with a brokerage meeting between the SLE, the alliance's SLE facilitator and key staff from the supported school to discuss the area of need, the timescale of the work and expected outcomes with measurable impact.

Once deployments are underway, contact is maintained by email or phone calls to ensure that everything is on track. Each half term, a core team meet to share local data and to identify areas for concern as well as to review the progress of current SLE deployments. At an agreed end date, all parties meet again to look at the outcomes and evaluate impact.

A wide range of SLE work has been undertaken over the past two years, supported by schools and the local authority. The vast majority of the 21 deployments undertaken so far have been very successful, with 15 leading to improved Ofsted outcomes and/or improved SATs results, 70% of supported schools that have since been inspected by Ofsted moved from 'requires improvement' to 'good' and the remaining 30% at least maintained their Ofsted category. All other supported schools, that received full SLE deployments, at least met the floor performance targets this year, with significant increases seen in performance data for all supported schools.

Schools have viewed the support very positively and in a number of cases, SLE deployments have led to further commissions. For example, one SLE was initially deployed to a school for five days with a focus on improving the quality of teaching in year two. Once trust and strong relationships had been established, the school quickly commissioned extra work for the SLE to focus on the transition from reception to year one and to support the planning of year one literacy.

Deployments have resulted in mutual benefits both for SLEs' own schools and for those receiving support, both in terms of staff development and in sharing practice and ideas. For example, one SLE deployment to support teaching and learning in Year 2, was extended after trust and understanding had been built between both parties. The SLE went on to provide support on transition from Reception to Year 1 and to carry out an audit on the teaching of literacy in Year 1. Following the deployment, the school moved to a 'good' Ofsted judgement and the SLE took ideas and knowledge learnt on the deployment back to their own classroom.

Bishop Rawstone Church of England Academy Teaching School Alliance (led by Bishop Rawstone Church of England Academy)

Bishop Rawstone has made SLE development and deployment central to its teaching school activity. A current team of 19 SLEs from five secondary alliance schools is led by Bishop Rawstone's executive headteacher, himself an NLE. Building this team from within the alliance has been closely connected to significant long-term investment in staffing, to enable the capacity for school-to-school support. SLEs receive targeted support and training, including the development of coaching skills.

The alliance's approach is to designate SLEs only where an actual or impending need has been identified, by responding to and where possible predicting multi-sector needs from across the alliance. Over 130 SLE days have been commissioned so far, with 100% positive feedback so far and increasing requests for support. Areas where support is frequently required include guidance with intervention, the use of data, leadership and management and raising achievement in the core subjects.

Bishop Rawstone's SLE provision is due to be expanded soon, to include primary and special schools, with the aim of recruiting, deploying and quality assuring a team of over 30 SLEs by 2014.

Transform Alliance (led by Sneinton Primary School)

Transform's SLE provision is a key part of its school-to-school support strategy. SLE areas of specialism have been identified through a needs analysis within the alliance and across the local area. As well as going through NCTL's rigorous application process, SLEs are involved in an assessment and validation process to identify particular strengths.

Transform uses SLEs as part of a structured whole-alliance approach to school improvement. SLEs support the alliance's commitment to 'narrowing the gap' programmes, as well as designing joint practice development activity to help colleagues improve their practice.

The alliance's SLEs build capacity in other schools and partnerships by modeling practice and working with groups of teachers on development priorities. Clear objectives are negotiated with any school receiving SLE support, to ensure measurable impact.

SLEs also work with other system leaders within the alliance, as part of a wider, long term action plan to improve attainment and achievement, with practice and ideas shared through regular networking opportunities.

Research and development

The Learning Teaching & Leadership Alliance (led by The Heath School)

The Heath School is an 11-16 academy with around 1100 pupils. Almost a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM) and/or pupil premium funding and the school's research activity has largely focused on closing the attainment gap between these and other pupils.

The Heath appointed two assistant principals on secondment in September 2011, with a focused brief on researching into best practice and strategies for narrowing the attainment gap. One assistant principal focused on transition and teaching and learning in Year Seven. The other looked at the impact of audited interventions in school.

The work that The Heath has undertaken so far has seen an impact on FSM pupils, particularly in maths. Highly effective monitoring and tracking processes have been developed. Interventions have included the purchase of revision guides, revision weekends/after school sessions, additional one-to-one or small group tuition, numeracy/dyscalculia sessions, employment of a maths intervention teacher, 'master classes' and the development of a three day intensive maths course for a small cohort of FSM children. The gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils making expected progress in maths has narrowed from 20% in 2011 to 11% 2013.

Another key outcome has been the production of a three year research-based action plan for the use of pupil premium funding. The Heath School's work on utilising the pupil premium to reduce the attainment gap has been 'highly commended' in the TES Pupil Premium Awards.

The school also became involved in an 18 month NCTL 'Closing the Gap' project looking at how system leaders and schools can work together to narrow gaps. The Heath focused on the SLE role as a vehicle for supporting underachievement in English, targeting a cohort of Year 11 FSM pupils in a supported school. A key part of the research was an exploration of the barriers that have to be overcome, in order to effectively enable an intervention to be adopted and embedded in another school.

The Heath School will begin a new 'Test and Learn' project, also focusing on closing the gap, in September 2013. This two year initiative will involve trialling interventions with two supported schools (one primary and one secondary), monitoring the effectiveness and impact of different approaches.

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