



Case Study of School-to-School Support

SLE: Chris Cooknell Science

The Focus

To work with the Science team with a focus on raising progress for the most able and disadvantaged students.

The Process

Initial contact was by email with the school and this allowed for some details of their requirements to emerge. My first visit to the school was to meet the Deputy Head to discuss her requirements, and to have a short meeting with the Head of Faculty to make contact and decide on next steps. A couple of weeks later I returned for a programme of observations, pupil voice and discussion with the whole team. After gathering as much “intelligence” as I could I pulled together my thoughts and drafted an action plan.

I agreed the plan with the Head of Department, and arranged a time to go to the school and launch the intervention with the department. The team kept logs of their work on shared documents so that I was able to see what was happening.

I returned in the autumn term to observe more lessons and meet with staff to discuss their progress and next steps.

Reflections from Chris

I was working with a team of hard-working, skilled teachers in a department that was under pressure to improve, they additionally had some internal difficulties with staffing. I had to be sensitive to their experiences and morale but also give them confidence that I could help them. Getting to know the team was critical in achieving “buy-in”. I was not there to “rescue” them but to reassure them about all of the things that they were already getting right and help them to “become even better”.

If I repeated the experience I would establish trust in a similar way, draw on their own goals, ideas and suggestions. Motivation is a key component in starting and sustaining change. Using shared documents/blogs is a good way to keep up with the work of the team and offer individual advice and encouragement to staff.

Working with the school was easy during the quiet weeks of the summer, but much more challenging during the autumn term.

Evidence of impact

Year 7 raw scores have increased slightly from an average of 24.08 in 2018 to 25.31 in 2019.

Progress from KS2 entry grade has also increased slightly from 0.58 in 2018 to 0.62 in 2019.

Teacher voice and reports of pupil voice indicate positive impact of the support across year groups and subjects. Experiments and demonstrations introduced in Chemistry and Physics. These are now embedded in schemes of work. Team members contributing and collaborating to improve schemes of work.

Feedback

“This was good value for money when considering the time Chris spent with us in school.”

“Very positive comments and feedback from Chris, but also probing to allow staff to set targets for improvement.”

“It was great to work with Chris on this project. His enthusiasm and knowledge were motivational. It was also invaluable to work with someone doing the same job as us - teaching science, who really understands the role.”