

Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

Continuing Professional Development 2018-19

We have a duty to incrementally understand always do more and better in an enlightened way to engage and shape the children and young people as curious and creative and civil and kind people.

The team reflects together on the matter of what best practice and best practitioners look like and that has been shared and is reproduced below.

School improvement over time has identified a few core and key priorities that should impact all of us every day across our roles and disciplines:

- Throughout the team each individual across disciplines will relentlessly ask themselves how they are going to develop their understanding and practice to promote and embed positive behaviours and learning in the children and young people;
- Continuously seeking to understand the children better in all their diversity and complexity, spark and challenge and being a “present” and active listener and contributor to and sometimes leader of the shifting and dynamic conversation formal and informal about best-practice;
- The humility to recognise where their practice has frailties and standards are slipping and behaviour and learning are at risk and the humility too to speak up and seek help to improve;
- Consistently demonstrating the graft and energy to make real both emerging and the established best practice we have learned and shared and set out over time through bloody hard work and being alive and open to new ideas and ways of working.

The school has measurably progressed and improved in its journey from “special measures” to “good”; we then have improved as individuals and a team but how and how best to sustain that positive momentum in a context where the mercurial, complex and challenging nature of the children and young people and our own innate frailties mean what is “good” is always at risk.

There is another nuance to this the old school notion in public service of attending courses, diligently completing an evaluation form and cascading learning; a neat model but in our experience one of the least impactful.

How have we developed then and how can we develop further? Themes have emerged that describe how and why folk are developing and learning all the time...

Theme one: a context and school culture for learning and development

- The team describes “belonging” as significant and feeling valued.

- **Being exposed to greater responsibility but coached and critically with a no blame approach to mistakes and that we learn more in failure and from adversity than success.**
- Linked to this is a strong sense in the team of the value of forgiveness and redemption and fresh starts for children but also grown-ups.
- These healthy approaches rooted in authentic trust between colleagues and support that is practical and emotional.
- New and newer staff describe a strong sense of inclusivity and belonging. Equality too emerges as a factor with good practice and insightful contributions encouraged and valued across the team regardless of rank.
- **Intelligent risk taking and a “contribute to the solution stop describing the problem” mentality key elements in a wider culture of “can do”.**
- Powerfully pertinent below also is staff in a majority **embrace the notion of change us to change them; that by becoming more self-aware and discerning in our behaviours we can positively change ourselves and so the children and young people.**
- As always the notion of “going the extra mile” and discretionary effort for and investment in both the students and our colleagues is present and like an athlete pushing herself harder we discover we can do more and critically learn more about the children and ourselves when we push and challenge our own limits.
- **Although described as “thinking on one’s feet” a wider culture of “dynamic risk assessment “and on the job problem solving another important contributor to a culture where learning and development can and do happen all the time...**

Theme two: how we are as people impacts hugely on our ability to learn and develop?

- The team has described a developing sense of **taking personal responsibility** for one’s own development and being alive to opportunities to do so specifically:
- High expectations of self and children and peers.
- Naturally **self-evaluative and healthily self-critical with a genuine desire to self-improve.**
- Authentically embraces the wider school core value change us to change them...
- Curious about the child and engaged with the family and other professionals and wants to understand the child to then and critically modify and develop and improve practice.
- Speaks up seeks clarity actively wants and pursues input and insight.
- **An active observer of and listener to others (including children and families and other professionals) in the pursuit of best practice.**
- Discerning seeks out best practitioners not best friends...embraces challenge does not seek consolation for faulty views and behaviours in “ghetto sub groups”.
- Seeks a wide circle of professional friends beyond teaching and public service and therefore new and different and fresh ideas and insights.

- Sees opportunities to learn across their lives at home, on the football pitch, in the newspaper; they are alive to what is analogous and applicable to their work however apparently out of left field.
- **An active participant and contributor who shares freely insights and opinions and listens and absorbs and acts with equal rigour.**
- Once best practice embeds models and spreads it; a teacher and a learner.
- Actively seeking and welcoming feedback an example teachers actively asking to be observed more often.
- Generosity of spirit and bringing positivity and affirmation to the daily challenges of school life makes us problem solvers.
- **The ability to present as always positive and optimistic in the face of powerful pressures and stresses allows us keep problem solving and learning.**
- Resilient has “bounce-back-ability” and can therefore sustain a positive problem solving approach to challenges...can overcome obstacles can persist and like a musician, athlete or skilled tradesperson relentlessly practice until a skill is mastered and secure.
- A willingness to just get on with stuff and a lack of preciousness a characteristic of staff that have measurably grown in status and influence; they are high value low maintenance.
- **Accepting we may have to look at things quite differently and that we all have blind-spots.**
- Developing incrementally greater self-awareness and self-control just as we seek in the children and young people so we can be self-improving.
- Developing a positive and healthy but individual and nuanced professional character and style and being self-aware about its strengths and frailties.
- **Seeks exposure to challenges and responsibilities to be stretched and to learn; not scared of failure because they learn from it.**

Theme three: if we get the culture about right and essentially healthy attitudes as an individual where are the best opportunities to learn and develop?

- There are the traditional routes of formal training that if entered into with thought and commitment and are in step with our core goals of educating the children with energy and creativity and keeping them safe and promoting happiness and kindness in them if you ask you get. Recent examples: counselling; mentoring; Thrive; CP level 3; safer recruitment.

The internet has brought another dimension for example many of us have accessed accredited “Prevent” training.

- What is key is that any formal external training both has direct pertinence and once tackled has a measurably positive impact on school improvement priorities that in turn must always privilege learning and teaching and behaviour, safety and wellbeing.
- Colleagues described the powerful value of the steady drip of briefings and meetings and best practice sessions where we have worked right from the start of the project to avoid inert information sharing and to be, creative and proactive and problem solving.

Professional characteristics of best SEMH practitioners:

Can you demonstrate and evidence them?

1. Are safe and transparent and have integrity and humility; they admit their errors and recognise their frailties and seek support and guidance. *When did you last admit a meaningful professional error or seek and apply advice? When did your professional ethics and values influence your decision-making and actions? When did you last do a difficult thing because it was the right thing?*
2. Believe we must change to change the students: we own the behaviour and must seek to change it positively. They look **in** for solutions not **out** for blame. *What have you done recently to improve your practice? What was its impact?*
3. Reflect usefully on successes and challenges and seek solutions together to those difficulties they face: they are always optimistic never gloomy; the glass is always half full for them and challenges are opportunities, they make the clichés meaningful again. *What challenges are you currently facing and more significantly what are you doing about it?*
4. Are prepared to graft and be generous in their discretionary effort to achieve those solutions: they go the extra mile. *When did you last do something in your own time professionally?*
5. Dislike the behaviour but always like the child and are quick to forgive the children, their colleagues and themselves and move on positively. *Can you give a recent example of showing this generosity of spirit?*
6. Are wise to the worst outcome but expect the best at all times: they have “withitness”, they pay attention to the detail. *When did you last prevent a difficulty through anticipatory, proactive and “withit” behaviour; give an example?*
7. Are on-time, visible, rigorous, energetic and proactive throughout their work. Have you been late recently? When were you last early? *When did you last lead or were you in charge of something; an activity, a trip, a team? What have you done to be proud of and celebrate?*
8. They make policy and guidance real by living it. *Quote some even loosely and evidence its significant application in your work recently*
9. They are diligent and meticulous in their recording and administering: they value it and do it even though it’s often irksome. *When did you last make an entry in the school record keeping book? Do you record serious incidents promptly and fully? Do you read the school recording/communication documents frequently? What was the last entry you made or read? Quote it?*
10. Believe reward changes and consequence discourages and use both imaginatively the latter powerfully but in moderation and with restraint the former with sincerity and often. *When did you last reward or sanction a student? Describe its nature; was it imaginative, impactful?*

What do we see and experience when we encounter...

The outstanding SEMH teacher in the school community	Outstanding teaching in the SEMH classroom
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is ever present and has an outstanding attendance record: however good you are you are no good if you are not there. 2. They care about how they look and make an appropriate effort to be dressed appropriately and in context to show respect to the pupils: the PE teacher's trainers are clean; the DT teacher's apron too... 3. In all things they are the "extra-milers" who give discretionary effort freely because they have a strong pride in their vocation, in their profession, they are proud to be teachers because they authentically like and respect the children and young people and the students tell us so when asked. 4. However tough life may be personally and professionally they are "troopers" and present to the children always as committed and caring and enthused; their warmth and energy are contagious and adults and children feel better around them. 5. They go where the children are: they sit on the liveliest table at lunch; they ref the most fractious football game; they look to be useful; they offer themselves to colleagues; they never hide; they are true team players 😊 6. They engage with parents and carers and professionals with care and sometimes necessary caution but they are accessible and seek to build a positive network of grown-ups around the child. 7. They contribute intelligently to the diverse conversation formal and informal about best practice and they have a platform to do so and are seen as authentic and credible by their peers because they are reliably successful in their teaching 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The classroom environment hits visitors immediately the very best draw instant praise with its warmth and good order and care with attractive cared for displays and a tidiness and attention to detail. Resources and equipment are diverse, pertinent, attractive and well cared for 2. You feel their energy and warmth and presence as you enter a lesson and as a result you feel the security and calm in the children and young people. 3. Praise and affirmation and celebration are ever present but also credible and supported by constructive criticism and a warm polite assertiveness about behaviour 4. It is clear the children and young people feel they belong and have an affiliation to their teacher and their classroom and their school. 5. Strong and familiar expectations, routines, rhythms are all embedded creating a climate in which... 6. ...the children are engaged and enthused and there is an element of risk and fun in learning and subject knowledge robust supporting and extending with confidence and skill. 7. Assessment for learning can happen freely and deep down and children and young people know where they are and what to do next in their learning and can tell you. 8. Progress is good and increasingly outstanding and can be seen happening... 9. Support staff are embedded and confident in this context and an extension of the teacher and able to operate independently and under direction.

What do we see and experience when we encounter...

...the outstanding learning support in the school community	...outstanding learning support in the classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is ever present and has an outstanding attendance record: however good you are you are no good if you are not there. • In all things they are the “extra-milers” who give discretionary effort freely because they have a strong pride in their work, they are proud of their role because they authentically like and respect the children and young people and the students tell us so when asked. • However tough life may be personally and professionally they are “troopers” and model for the children always commitment and care and positivity; their warmth and energy are contagious and adults and children feel better around them. • They like their best teacher colleagues go where the children are: they sit on the liveliest table at lunch; they play football with energy and humour; they look to be useful; they offer themselves to colleagues; they never hide; they are true team players 😊 • They listen hard and with compassion and are always alert to the children’s safety and wellbeing. • They ceaselessly seek to build their understanding of and respect for and rapport with the children and young people but also as they are so often the “glue” that holds the community together they do so with colleagues and as their confidence grows beyond to sharing with and challenging... <p>Parents and carers and professionals of all kinds and they are humble but confident in their insights and sharing and folk listen because they are clearly good at the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They contribute intelligently to the diverse conversation formal and informal about best practice and they have a platform to do so and are seen as authentic and credible by their peers because they are reliably successful in their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best LSAs relentlessly and skilfully build trust and rapport in the classroom with teachers and pupils as a result... • ...they have status, influence and are a “presence” in the classroom. • They are fluent in the expectations and rhythms, rituals and routines of the classroom and can assert them. • They have clarity about the learning objectives and goals and support them. • They are intelligently proactive and have sound judgment knowing when to intervene and when to hold, when to support when to assert and encourage greater independence in the child and they are always vigilant about the risks of dependency. • They are equally comfortable working under the direction of the teacher or using their growing insight and confidence to work autonomously and take the initiative and they move intelligently between the two. • <u>They are never passive</u> and if uncertain will speedily seek instruction if they need it. • As their confidence grows they not only work as a partner with the teacher but can challenge them and... • ...when necessary increasingly initiate and lead work in the classroom both in behaviour and learning. • In time they can lead small groups and purposefully cover classes as they develop and learn...