

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT

for

Maney Hill Primary School

October 2015

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1 Assessment Summary

1.1 Key Information

Assessment Type	3-year Review
Investors in People Specialist	Mike Bramall
Visit Date	8 th & 9 th October 2015
Assessment Enquiry Number	ENQ-94943-3KL27Q

1.2 Outcome

I am pleased to confirm that Maney Hill Primary School (the school) continues to be recognised as an Investor in People having met all the requirements of the core Standard. I am especially pleased to confirm that the school has also achieved the Bronze award, having met a total of 84 Evidence Requirements.

This report shows that investing in its staff and demonstrating good leadership throughout the school are real priorities for the Governors and the Leadership Team. This is reflected in the very good people management practices and in the enthusiasm, engagement and commitment that all staff show towards the school.

My congratulations go to Sarah Whitehead, the Leadership Team and all the members of staff for this achievement. Everyone has contributed to this outcome and it has been a pleasure to experience their enthusiasm, commitment and capability.

1.3 Milestone Dates

Please note that this accreditation is conditional upon the following milestone activities.

A formal site visit to gain an update on developments, review progress against the recommendations and begin the transition to the 6 th Generation IIP Framework.	On or around 9 th April 2017 (18 months from the current Assessment date)
Date of next full Assessment	A further successful review on or before the 3-year anniversary of the original recognition date. Please note that this will be against the new 6 th Generation IIP Framework.

Mike Bramall

Investors in People Specialist
October 2015

2 Current context, objectives and scope.

2.1 Background and current context.

The last three years has shown a lot of changes to key senior positions and within the teaching staff. These include

- Three changes within the Leadership Team, namely the appointment of a new Bursar, the appointment of a new acting head of Key Stage 2 to cover maternity leave and the resignation of the former Deputy Head who left to join a different school.
- Eight new appointments within the teaching staff since the last review.
- A new Chair of Governors appointed two years ago.

It should be noted that some of the changes to the teaching staff were part of a longer-term plan to bring an element of youth and freshness to the teaching staff. Nonetheless, the combination of all the above would, by any measure, be considered a significant amount of change but I am pleased to note that this has all been effected and absorbed with a minimum of fuss and with no apparent detriment to the school's mission and values. To the contrary, the objective of bringing a new approach and new vigour to the teaching staff would seem to have been entirely successful.

The school continues to search for a new Deputy Head, but a recent external recruitment campaign failed to produce any suitable candidates for final interview.

The School has recently set up a new temporary reception class as part of an exploratory initiative to expand to a two-form entry basis. This is considered important in giving more resource and more flexibility to its teaching staff. However, this has also posed some challenges.

- The temporary accommodation measures are causing some disruption to the school's normal daily activities.
- There is some uncertainty within the staff in general about the longer-term outcome and therefore about implications for the staff themselves.

In the meantime, the school should be proud of its achievements in maintaining its 'Excellent' Ofsted rating, in continuing to receive complimentary feedback from parents and in creating a calm and effective teaching environment where the mission of preparing the children for lifelong success can be delivered.

2.2 Objectives

As set out in the Assessment Plan, the main objectives in being assessed against the extended IIP framework were essentially

- To gain independent feedback on all aspects of its people-management practices.
- To gain wider external validation of the emphasis the school likes to put on its staff.
- To provide a greater 'stretch' in support of the schools' ambition for continued improvement
- To get objective and subjective feedback on the levels of staff engagement.

2.3 Scope of the assessment

The school currently employs 34 teachers and support staff, 10 of whom were interviewed during the assessment, including the Chair of the Board of Governors.

Feedback on the outcomes, strengths, staff engagement and areas for continuous improvement were given on 9th October to Sarah Whitehead (Head Teacher), Rob Crosson (Chair of Governors) and Sarah Mills (Bursar).

2.4 Future considerations

The 84 Evidence Requirements met under this assessment are deemed to be valid or 'banked' for 12 months. This means that the School can come forward at any time before 9th October 2016 to be assessed against the additional 31 ERs that it would need to achieve the Silver award. Whilst this is an additional expense, it would be much less than the cost of a full assessment such as the current one.

The proposed change to the new 6th Generation at the next 3-year anniversary also lends additional weight to going for Silver in the next 12 months.

2.5 Acknowledgement and thanks

I would like to thank Sarah Whitehead, Rob Crosson and all the staff for the interest and involvement they have shown throughout this review.

I would also ask Sarah to pass on my thanks to everyone I met for the openness and enthusiasm they showed during the interviews.

3 Summary and overall impressions

This has been an enjoyable Assessment to undertake and it is a pleasure to be able to give the feedback summarised by this report. This is essentially due to the interest and involvement of the leadership team and the enthusiasm, co-operation and openness of all the people I met, both formally and informally. Everyone was very happy to share their experiences with me and to describe what it is like to work at the school.

What became evident from the first day is that people thoroughly enjoy working at the school. As shown under 'Strengths, this is mainly due to their passion for the teaching environment, the friendly working atmosphere, the sense of achievement and the opportunities to be involved in the wider school activities. This in turn is reinforced by the school's extremely supportive and considerate approach to its staff and the desire to give them opportunities to learn and develop.

The engagement and commitment of staff to the school is very good and I am pleased to be able to quantify this in Section 5 in support of one of the key objectives. Throughout the assessment, people showed very high levels of passion, enthusiasm and commitment in the way they talked about the children, the school, their work and their colleagues.

This underlying engagement and commitment is a key factor in creating and maintaining the school's local reputation and its Ofsted rating of 'Excellent'. Needless to say, it will be important to preserve the leadership style and maintain the focus on people so as to continue to develop and improve the pupil experience.

4 Strengths and good practice.

The following are a summary of areas of particular strength and good practice. They are summarised under 'themes' so as to be more relevant to the school's terminology and its daily activities.

4.1 Common vision and values

Everyone in the school shares the vision and purpose of equipping the children with the skills and attitudes for lifelong success, and all their activities and energy are directed to setting high standards in the way they do this.

This is reinforced by the focus placed by the leadership team on the attitude and behaviours of the staff as well as their teaching, administrative and supervisory skills.

4.2 School's planning process.

I am pleased to note the way that all staff are involved in contributing to or commenting on the School Development Plan (SDP) and the way the outcomes are summarised under core KPIs or objectives for the coming year. These in turn form the basis of individual objectives, thereby ensuring congruence between high-level objectives and individual activities.

4.3 Performance management

There is a thorough and well-embedded approach to managing performance at an individual level and for the school itself.

- All staff benefit from an annual three-part appraisal process at which their performance over the previous year is reviewed, personal objectives are set for the coming year and progress during the year is reviewed. In addition, all teachers have formal observations twice each term, each of which includes formal feedback and further discussion on development support or areas for improvement.
- At a school level, the Head Teacher has established a 'monitoring calendar' that sets out all the relevant quality assurance activities for the year. External benchmarking is also carried out through involvement with other schools in its 'curriculum collaboration group'.

4.4 Sharing best practice.

Again, the school is very effective at sharing best practice, both internally and externally

- The leadership team is very keen to encourage people to share skills and experiences both formally and informally. The observations are core to this process but additional measures such as the triad groups are equally effective in the way they encourage participants to be imaginative in the way they support each other's learning and development. This imagination and innovation is a key part of encouraging people's development through their wider contribution to the school
- Inset days and staff training days are also used as collective learning events and as an opportunity for staff to raise issues and put forward new ideas.

4.5 Learning and development support.

It follows from the above that there is a very good culture of making best use of people's experience and capability in supporting the collective improvement of teaching and support roles.

- Buddying, coaching and mentoring are used very effectively to support the measures identified and agreed through the appraisal and observation processes.
- Formal inductions and structured programmes help to support newly qualified teachers.
- Many of the support staff have had specialist training in H&S, child security and first aid.
- All teaching staff are encouraged to develop and demonstrate leadership qualities in the way they exert a positive influence in their own role and in the school's wider activities.
- Specialist external programmes are used to support the wider development of the school itself, such as the Bursar's attendance at the School Business Manager's Programme.

4.6 Opportunity and equality

There are a number of examples of people progressing to positions of greater responsibility either due to the recent changes in teaching staff or through some imaginative ways of using people's wider skills and hobbies to benefit the children and the school. Either way, there is a real culture of wanting to develop from within and to reward those who show ambition, enthusiasm and potential with wider opportunities. Clear examples of this include the encouragement of a former lunchtime supervisor to take on the role of Teaching Assistant, and a relatively newly appointed teacher being given the acting role of Key Stage 2 and Maths Leader and, therefore, automatically becoming a member of the leadership team.

4.7 Empathy and consideration.

The school shows a lot of empathy and flexibility in responding to people's personal circumstances and doing what it can to support people's work-life balance in general. There is no doubt that this is a key factor in creating the high levels of engagement and motivation described in Section 5.

4.8 Recognition

There is a good culture of acknowledging people's contribution through informal thanks and praise, either spontaneously or at assemblies and staff meetings. More formal appreciation is shown collectively through the Christmas party, the summer event and other social events such as quiz nights and race nights.

It is interesting to note that the staff also consider the development and progression opportunities that the school can give them as another form of recognition and appreciation.

4.9 Role of the Governors

The school is fortunate to have an experienced and knowledgeable Chair of Governors who, with the Head Teacher, can help to lead the collective development of the Board itself to become more expert in school governance and so to become more effective in supporting the school's longer-term strategic direction.

5 Employee engagement.

5.1 Introduction

Creating high levels of employee engagement is a key factor in becoming a high-performing organisation, regardless of scale or sector. It is equally true that good leadership and people-management skills are the most influential factors in creating them. This topic is also very closely linked to the Investors in People framework in that many of the principles set out in the Standard are aimed at improving employee engagement through their empowerment, involvement and enjoyment of work as well as improving their skills and opportunities.

For these reasons, and in order to inform against one of the objectives for this assessment, I have taken a structured approach to assessing the current levels of engagement within the school.

5.2 IIP Engagement Index

I used the interviews as an opportunity to conduct an 'IIP engagement survey' by asking everyone except the members of the leadership team to give a score 'out of ten' for how good they feel about working at the school, taking everything into account. The intention was to use this as a way of finding out what the school or its leaders could do to improve their enjoyment of work if their scores were relatively low. This method is very effective because the interviews enable me to drill down into people's responses to find out the underlying reasons for them feeling good or for any areas of discontent.

The actual score also enable me to quantify the feedback in the form of an Engagement Index as shown below.

Question
"Please give a score out of ten to show how good you feel about working at Maney Hill Primary School at the moment, taking everything into account".
Response
IIP Engagement Index = 91%

This is an exceptionally good score and it totally supports the impressions and observations gained during the interviews. Simply put, all staff really enjoy their work at the school and are proud of the role they play in supporting the children's development.

5.3 People enjoy....

This approach also enabled me to probe more deeply into the reasons why the scores were so good and to learn more about why people enjoy working at the school. The most common responses include.....

- People love teaching and they love working with children.
- They have a good rapport with their colleagues and other staff.
- There is good social interaction where people are friends out of school as well as within.
- People have the opportunity to progress and develop.
- They are given a good deal of autonomy and independence.
- They feel well supported in their work and in their career development.
- The school shows a lot of empathy and flexibility towards personal circumstances.

All these points fully reinforce the statements made in Section 3 and show how organisations such as the school, which show a real interest in their people and the way they are led, can create a working environment which results in people making comments such as those listed above.

5.4 People would change...

Only three issues were raised when people were asked what the school could do to improve things for them.

- The role of the teacher has changed and it now includes some elements of reporting that are not felt to be constructive. However, it is readily acknowledged that this applies to all schools not just Maney Hill.
- Can communications be improved so that everyone knows about any last minute changes that can affect the normal school activities? This enables people to make adjustments rather than being taken by surprise.
- There is some uncertainty in the minds of staff over some issues that have a longer-term impact. They would like more clarity around....
 - the current additional reception class
 - the potential move to a two form entry school.
 - the appointment of a new deputy Head

5.5 Summary

All of the positive comments above and the Engagement Index of 91% are a logical outcome of the strengths listed in Section 3 and they re-affirm my view that the school enjoys very high levels of staff engagement.

The greatest challenge may lie in protecting this level of engagement by introducing and implementing any longer-term changes in such a way that staff feel that opportunities for development and wider involvement are enhanced rather than threatened.

6 Continuous improvement plan

Introduction

The following recommendations do not necessarily infer any areas of poor performance. Some are suggestions for new things to try and others relate to existing practices which have potential for continuous improvement through extension, refinement or sophistication. All of them are put forward in support of the school's continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement plan.

Suggested Actions	Potential Benefit
<p>6.1 Mission, vision and values statements. Consider adding an additional bullet point to your 'shared vision' that relates to the staff and describes the importance you place on their role in equipping the children with the skills and attitudes to ensure lifelong success. A final bullet point to your 'shared vision' could read..."we aim to provide all the above through teachers and support staff who are caring, professional, skilled and highly motivated".</p>	<p>Confirms the importance you put on your staff and acknowledges the role they play.</p>
<p>6.2 Performance management. Consider involving Mina, the Senior Lunchtime Supervisor, in the appraisals of all the other lunchtime supervisors. For the supervisors, this would mean they were appraised by someone who knows them and their work very well and, for Mina, this would acknowledge her detailed understanding of the style and capability of all the other supervisors and would recognise her contribution by giving her additional the responsibility. This would also take some of the workload from the Head Teacher.</p>	<p>Pragmatic use of the team's direct supervisor.</p>

<p>6.3 Succession</p> <p>I encourage you to take a more structured approach to succession planning for the school as a whole from two aspects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing the longer-term leadership of the school by identifying and developing ‘successors’ who you believe to have the capability and potential to progress to more senior positions. • Protecting the school from the short-term risk of staff absence by identifying and nominating ‘deputies’ who can take over key responsibilities at short notice but who will return to their normal role when the need has gone. <p>A starting point could be to ask each member of the wider leadership team to show...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How their Key Stage or Subject would be managed and led if they were to be absent for 3 months or more. • Who in their team has the longer-term potential to succeed them. • What they have done to enable candidates for each of these to gain the skills and knowledge they need so that they can take over, either as deputies now or as successors in the future. <p>The individual solutions can then be combined to provide your succession ‘gap analysis’ on which you can start building your action plan to mitigate the risk to the school. A further refinement would then be to link individual career and development paths to your succession plans.</p>	<p>Protects the school against short-term risk of absence and ensures the longer-term succession.</p> <p>Supports your talent management plans and gives greater flexibility to the management resource.</p>
<p>6.4 Staff well-being</p> <p>In line with your empathy and flexibility in responding to staff personal circumstances, you may take a more formal approach to discussing and recording the physical and emotional well-being of all staff as part of their annual appraisal process.</p> <p>This will be highly motivational by showing the staff that the school is interested in them as people as well as being members of staff.</p>	<p>Clear demonstration of the focus you have on people</p>

<p>6.5 Uncertainty.</p> <p>As mentioned in Section 5, there is a degree of uncertainty among the staff over the longer-term outcome of the two-form entry trial. Whilst you may not yet have a clear outcome, it would be helpful to everyone if you could share the current scenarios and decision making process so that they are at least aware of the things you are grappling with.</p> <p>The more they know about the background and the more involved they become, the more they will empathise with the longer-term challenges you face and the short-term disruption that may arise.</p>	<p>Makes staff feel involved and increases their empathy with the school.</p> <p>Reduces uncertainty and rumours</p>
<p>6.6 Recognition</p> <p>Consider the following as additional 'formal' ways of recognising exceptional contribution to the school and loyalty of service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some form of 'Star' award given for exceptional contribution to the school as a whole. This can be aimed at behaviours and actions, as well as teaching, especially in regard to those that compliment your vision and values. Awards should only be given when deserved, rather than at an agreed frequency, so that they become really meaningful when received. • Give long service awards for anyone having 10 years or more service to the school, thereafter in 5 years increments. Mark the event with a simple presentation or gift at the staff briefing, or assembly, and include an article in the newsletter giving a brief history of their career within the school. 	<p>Additional recognition in line with the school's core objectives.</p> <p>Recognises and celebrates long service.</p>
<p>6.7 Staff attraction and retention</p> <p>You may always be considered a 'feeder' school because of you current scale but there may be more that you can do to help keep those younger aspiring teachers who might otherwise move on to larger schools. Building on those elements that create high engagement and showing how your succession plans are linked to performance management and staff development may be a factor, especially if this includes some form of demonstration of potential career paths.</p>	<p>Helps to retain key staff.</p>

6.8 Measuring the impact of learning and development activities

As a further refinement of your performance management processes, try to include a formal pre-brief of the purpose, method and potential impact of any agreed learning activities or sharing of best practice. The circle should then be completed in subsequent appraisals by assessing the actual benefit to the individual of the support or learning given, and to measuring the impact this has had on the school's key objectives. By measuring it in this way, you will be better informed about those interventions that have the most impact on individual performance and on that of the school as a whole.

Improved understanding of the impact and effectiveness of learning activities.

Appendix 1 – Assessment results summary

Evidence requirements

	The Standard				Extended Framework																										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
Indicators 1	✓		✓	✓		✓																									8
2	✓	✓	✓	✓																											4
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																										7
4	✓	✓	✓																												3
5	✓	✓	✓	✓																											9
6	✓	✓	✓																												5
7	✓	✓	✓																												6
8	✓	✓	✓																												3
9	✓	✓	✓																												4
10	✓	✓	✓																												
										Total (extended framework)										47											
										Total (Standard)										37											
										Total met										84											

Key		IIP Standard (37 Evidence requirements met in full)
		Evidence Requirements met from the Extended framework
		Not part of the IIP framework