

Rosewood School: Development of Leadership through the Transdisciplinary Approach



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Sector Relevance: Special Schools and Colleges working with a range of Professionals

Key Words: Transdisciplinary; risk taking in leadership; evolving levels of leadership; Principle-Centred Leadership; Impacting on teaching and learning; shared assessments; Profound and Multiple learning Disabilities (PMLD)

Summary: Rosewood School has developed a Principle -Centred assessment and curriculum package that is implemented by both school staff and the members of the multi-disciplinary team who work with our learners with PMLD.

About Rosewood School: Rosewood is one of only a small number of schools nationally who cater exclusively for pupils with Profound and Multiple learning Disabilities, meaning that our majority population is often the minority in both special schools and colleges. The school serves both learners from the City and neighbouring Hampshire Local Authority. From September 2012 the school will re-launch as a free school and over two years plans to expand from the current number of 30 learners to be a 60 place school.

The Leadership Challenge: To integrate therapy, medical and other interventions to facilitate improved learning opportunities for all learners; in a climate of reduced services from external providers to schools. This is achieved through effective communication channels and clear roles and responsibilities supported by a research led approach to provision. Our approach to practice is explored in the videos accompanying this output, in which a teacher, physiotherapist and speech and language therapist each discuss their roles and the way in which our approach enables them to work effectively together to support learning. This approach is underpinned by the 'School Philosophy' and supporting 'Beliefs and Aims', both of which have been provided.

The Activity: Through a research led approach, the development of, alongside other professionals, shared assessment and curricula planning; training structures and management styles that support the effective implementation of these and challenge staff in a pursuit of excellence.

- We believe that we have a duty to provide our learners with the best educational opportunities and how we can best achieve this is to stay abreast of research and innovation within education. We have built research time for teachers into our School

Development Planning and have set systems in place to share new research and articles of interest. We subscribe as a school to a number of journals but to make this an active tool we have organised a file to collate articles of interest which is housed in the staff room. When staff read something of interest it is then placed in the file, highlighted at morning briefing and other staff can then easily access the file. On some occasions the articles are deemed so significant each class will be sent a copy. This process of systematic sharing of relevant information to support professional development has been led by the SMT but also from our Key Skill teams. As a staff we have also produced a number of articles which have been published in several journals.

- Active research is also part of our brief; most recently the lead teacher for Communication has undertaken extensive research into the development of Functional Hearing and devised a very detailed assessment tool to support all staff. This has become a valued resource to the local Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) team and her advice is now sought on some of the more complex learners across the city.
- Our research model and sharing views has impacted on how the role of our Key Skill Leaders has evolved. It reflects a consultative model of leadership where opinion, input and ideas from all are gathered and formulated as an agreed piece of work by the leader. This has led to us developing a model of staff meetings where alternate weeks are “Twilights”. These meetings are led by one of the Key skill leaders and/or a member of the multi-professional team and look at where the Key Skill Area needs to develop next, training required and feedback on the implementation of ImPACTS (ImPACTS is the school’s approach to Key Skills, which is delivered through 5 strands of learning, as defined by our ImPACTS Key Skill areas (Communication, Cognitive Skills, Physical Skills, Environmental Control Technology and Personal, Social and Emotional Well Being). ImPACTS key skills training and resources material are available from the school.
- INSET on a Key skill Area is also planned and delivered by the team with additional input and advice from the Deputy who leads on whole school training. The professional opportunity to deliver training has been a valuable part of raising standards of teaching and learning across the school.
- Key Skill Leaders and their teams have also started to deliver parent workshops and supported our parent’s role in the assessment process.
- The overall management of the Key Skill Leaders is the responsibility of the Deputy Head who works with the teams at various points and particularly when the area is on School Development Planning. The Key Skills area is then made a priority in terms of the time made available to the team and access to resources, training and INSET.
- At our recent OfSTED Inspection (January 2012) it was noted, “*The outstanding curriculum is well researched and rigorously reviewed.*” In addition, “*School leaders and managers are unrelenting in their drive to raise standards of teaching and learning*”

The Outcomes:

- Set of Beliefs and Aims agreed by all disciplines(Annex 1)
- Agreed "Philosophy of Education" (Annex 2)
- Shared leadership of curriculum areas between teachers and other professionals
- Shared assessment tools, using common language and framework to discuss learner's needs*
- Multi-disciplinary input moved to an advisory and training role with some hands on intervention maintained (Media Clips)
- Multi- disciplinary input to compulsory Induction Package for all staff
- Multi- disciplinary regular contributors to INSET, basic and advanced
- Whole team training where all disciplines work together

The Impact:

Managers/Leaders:

- Professional development and status across the whole multi professional team
- Greater understanding of their own role and the role of others in providing excellence in educational opportunities for all our learners
- Support at appropriate level to allow personal growth and increased autonomy
- Effective use of time allows for very specialist skill areas to be more effectively utilised across the school
- Whole school perspective and raised standards achieved through twilight staff meeting.
- Ongoing improvement of professional skill, knowledge and understanding through active research model.
- Permission to risk Take and try new approached linked to in-house research projects.

Staff:

- Greater understanding and valuing of other professionals and their roles and responsibilities
- Collaborative working and research projects leading to all staff understanding our learners better
- Quality Induction and INSET for all
- Shared leadership roles, with clear expectations and agreement of work to be undertaken
- Greater risk taking within a collaborative team

Learners:

- Detailed assessment facilitates targeted Individual Education Plan (IEP) writing relevant to the holistic needs of the learner
- Effective learner progress and where regression occurs, it can be effectively monitored
- Education is the focus in a respected and responsive environment

Parents:

- Consistency of approach
- Involvement in the assessment process
- Progress can be shared, recognised and celebrated within the family

Useful Links:

Rose Road [Website](#): Look for LSIS Link; includes multi –media clips by professionals working in the school.

ImPACTS Key Skills: (training and resources available from the school).