

Working in Hampshire Portsmouth Southampton

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

#### CONTENTS

What we offer Strategy and direction Evaluation and impact Where next? What are the lessons? Costs and savings This booklet tells the story of the Wessex Group's major programme of activity to develop its leaders. Between 2003 and 2010, more than 200 partnership staff have taken part in its annual leadership programmes. The programmes are described together with lessons learnt from developing a bespoke, in-house offer. Benefits are described including significant impact back in colleges as well as substantial cost savings.

### WHAT WE OFFER

The Wessex Group<sup>1</sup> offers a range of leadership development opportunities to its staff and senior managers. There are annual programmes for future, middle and senior managers as well as for support staff team leaders. From 2011, an accredited coaching programme with a focus on building capacity and improving performance is also offered to senior staff in the partnership.



<sup>1</sup> Formerly the Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges' Partnership

Programme	Brief description of content	No. of days	Period	
Support staff	Supervising assertively	3 1/2	3 months	
team leaders	<ul> <li>Dealing with difficult people</li> <li>How your role contributes to success in your college</li> <li>Managing diverse groups</li> <li>How to prioritise in a fast-changing environment</li> <li>Skills and qualities of effective leaders</li> <li>Your role as a leader in your college</li> </ul>			
Future	<ul> <li>Self management and leadership</li> </ul>	6	6 months	
	<ul><li>Leading others</li><li>Leading within my organisation and the sector</li></ul>			
Middle	Personal leadership development	6	10 months	
	<ul> <li>Strategy and vision – achieving excellence</li> <li>Building relationships – mastering inclusion, collaboration and influence</li> <li>Leading the team and managing performance</li> <li>Review, reflection and forward planning for personal development</li> </ul>			
Senior	Personal leadership development	5 1/2	9 months	
	<ul><li>Understanding and developing strategy</li><li>Leading organisations</li><li>Leading people</li></ul>			
Leadership Workshops (open to all on the leadership programmes)• Working with governors • Leading through a financial downturn • Good practice in managing underperforming staff • Managing strategic partnerships				
<ul> <li>Wentoring Programme</li> <li>With a college-based project for senior managers</li> <li>Open to all in the partnership and promoted at the start of each programme</li> </ul>				
Further six month review to assess impact				

The leadership programmes for future, middle and senior managers are **open to all staff** in the Wessex Group (including teaching, non-teaching and support staff), provided that they meet the general<sup>2</sup> and specific course requirements. The support staff team leaders' programme is targeted at support staff in a supervisory role.

All programmes have been **designed** and/or commissioned by the Wessex Group. The structure and content of the middle and senior managers' and support staff programmes have been designed and developed by the partnership. In the early stages, advice was taken from the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (latterly the Learning and Skills Improvement Service - LSIS) in order to ensure that there was some reference to the National Leadership Quality Framework. They also helped to strengthen the links between the different components of the programme. The future managers' programme is a largely off the shelf **programme** provided in-house by LSIS, although the programme was piloted in the Wessex Group following consultation with the partnership.

The programmes are delivered by a number of **different trainers**<sup>3</sup> **and internal staff**. The tailored programmes for middle and senior managers enable the content to flex to meet the needs of the participants and the changing external context, whilst the 'off the shelf' programme enables cost-effective development for first line managers. With the additional support of skills workshops led by Principals, **mentoring** and **work shadowing** delivered by staff from the partnership, the participants can draw on a rich mixture of learning.

<sup>2</sup> The Wessex Group's leadership programmes are prestigious and highly valued by those that have taken part in past training. It is expected that applications to take part in the programmes will be from staff who:

- have demonstrated commitment to their personal and career development
- are interested in furthering their career in sixth form colleges
- have been recommended for leadership development by managers who recognise their potential
- are interested in improving the impact that they have on the success of their college
- are committed to attending all modules of their programme.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Grahame Robb Associates; Monro Training; Qudos; Emeritus Training; LSIS Associates and others

## Strategy and direction

As the initiative grew from two programmes (for support staff and middle managers) to a much wider offer, the task of ensuring that the programmes remained of high quality and with practical impact became more complicated. An Executive Group for Leadership Programmes was established to lead the design and implementation of the partnership's programmes. The group includes three Principals, a senior support staff manager and two Vice-Principals, as well as the Partnership Manager. They review evaluations (which are sent routinely to all Principals and staff development officers); establish and host impact reviews six months after the end of programmes; and recommend changes to the intended outcomes of programmes to ensure that they all continue to match changing priorities and imperatives. See case study on page 7.

### EVALUATION AND IMPACT

The Wessex Group's programme of evaluation and review is substantial. Routine collection of satisfaction data provides a rapid assessment of the quality of delivery of the programmes. The Partnership Manager attends most programmes which not only helps to track quality; it also strengthens the links between sessions and generates briefings for mentors to inform their subsequent sessions with mentees. A full evaluation takes place at the end of each programme and delegates are asked to self-assess the impact of the programmes by reporting on three things that they are doing differently as a result of taking part. Finally, six months after the end of each programme, delegates are invited to attend a review session to:

- provide news about their careers
- report on what they are doing differently as a result of the programme
- highlight the most important lessons and
- offer their thoughts about any impact the programme has had in teams and colleges.

In addition, the Wessex Group conducted a major retrospective review of its programmes in 2010.

#### Data sources for review of programmes

- We used existing evaluation and impact data from partnership leadership programmes and individual programme reviews undertaken six months after the programmes ended
- We gathered new data from past participants in leadership programmes via four on-line questionnaires
- We gathered data from Human Resources and staff development officers in colleges about destination and impact
- We interviewed Principals and other key senior personnel about impact of programmes and what the future holds
- We held focus group meetings of middle and senior managers to clarify our understanding of what we had heard

The findings of the review are set out in detail in 'LSIS and the Partnership's Review of Leadership and Leadership Development in Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges' by Liz Winn and Jo Dale (April 2010) The impact of the programmes is positive and closely matched to the aims of the programmes. There were many examples of developments and action in a number of areas:

- more productive interaction and active listening
- stronger relationships and teams
- leading with confidence
- a new portfolio of skills and behaviours
- presenting a clearer vision
- leading improvements in colleges
- planning for the future.

#### CASE STUDY

# A bespoke programme to equip staff to work in changing circumstances

The Wessex Group had commissioned training for support staff team leaders over a number of years. The original brief was to help staff gain confidence in their skills, to manage priorities effectively and to challenge underperformance assertively. Team leaders on the programme returned positive evaluations and the training provider ran a well-valued programme.

Over time, the Executive Group considered the role and place of the support staff programme. The other leadership programmes were open to both teaching and non-teaching staff and there were aradually increasing numbers of support staff taking advantage of the wider offer. The purpose of the support staff programme had to be made more specific and focused on developing a group of staff who did not have access to the leadership programmes, yet who played a significant role in the success of their college. There was also a growing awareness of the likely impact of funding restraint upon the workforce and the way they would need to work in the future.

A new commissioning brief was developed. The aim of the new programme is to equip support staff team leaders to work effectively and with confidence in a fast-changing environment by:

- reinforcing their key role in the success of their college
- developing skills that help them to be effective in their jobs
- increasing self-awareness of current and transferable skills
- encouraging them to be aware of how they can use their skills to adapt to new circumstances / roles.

There will continue to be content to support skills development in supervising assertively, managing underperformance, effective ways to increase efficiency, managing diverse groups and prioritising in a fast-changing environment. We hoped not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

In addition, the participants will have access to a mentor (not their line manager) and will conduct a change management project on a current work issue, in order to help embed the learning.

# WHERE NEXT?

The review also highlighted a number of development areas for the programmes. The Executive Group recommended that the programmes should continue to include opportunities to work on current issues and concerns for the sector and to keep a watchina brief to ensure that they reflect the emerging agenda. There are plans to increase the existing role of Principals and senior staff in sharing their expertise and skills, particularly in the leadership workshops. The development of **coachina** as an effective performance tool was highlighted by delegates (who had had a taster on the programmes) and by experienced Principals and senior staff. The resultant programme was commissioned to reflect the findings of the review. Further work is planned to broaden the **constituency** of participants and links with the professional development departments in local authorities in the area are being pursued.

# WHAT ARE THE LESSONS?

The leadership programmes are highly valued by staff in the partnership. They have an excellent reputation and each year the brochure is hotly anticipated. Courses frequently have waiting lists and places are rationed to ensure a good spread of colleges taking part. People want to get on the courses because they have seen the outcomes for past participants; and senior staff are keen to put forward candidates because they know that the impact on performance is real and demonstrated.

Maintaining impact and reputation is dependent upon a number of factors.

Clear purpose and strategy Effective leadership Detailed briefing and commissioning External references Tight monitoring of quality Evaluation/review systems Use of in-house expertise Quality of trainers The right candidates for programmes

**Clear purpose and strategy** – the programmes have a clear purpose agreed by Principals and senior staff and which is regularly reviewed. The intended outcomes are closely tied to the strategies and needs of the colleges. Effective leadership – the Executive Group for Leadership Programmes meets to review annual programmes and to advise on the needs of future training. Members work at senior and/ or Principal level and communicate the needs and climate in colleges.

Detailed briefing and commissioning – the Partnership Manager translates the strategic message from the Executive Group into detailed briefs for trainers. She provides feedback to those delivering the courses, in the context of other trainers involved across all programmes. The overall programme design is her responsibility and although trainers will design their individual sessions, the content has been carefully negotiated.

**External references** – the programmes incorporate current policy and issues within their content. The format of the programmes is flexible enough to allow new content to be added and/or for exemplar material and case studies to reflect the changing economic and political environment. The format also refers to a national leadership framework which helps to ensure coherence across each programme.

**Tight monitoring of quality** – each event is monitored via satisfaction ratings from delegates. The attendance by the Partnership Manager at most events increases the understanding of any evaluation findings and enables her to describe nuances to mentors and other reviewers.

**Evaluation/review systems** – a rigorous system of evaluation and review has been established over a number of years. It includes a review of impact

in college and career outcomes for participants. There are mechanisms for ensuring that action is taken as a result of any findings that indicate the need to redevelop any aspects of the programmes.

Use of in-house expertise – the skills and experience of senior staff and Principals are incorporated into all programme content. In addition to the leadership workshops which run alongside the programmes and which are run by Principals, there are other opportunities for participants to draw on in-house expertise, for example in panel discussions, via the mentor scheme and in the provision of case studies and examples for participants to work on. This has added to the richness of the participants' experience and is highly valued by them.

Quality of trainers – the high quality of the trainers used by the Wessex Group has obviously played a very significant role in the success of the programmes. They have not only created welldifferentiated, interactive and experiential development programmes; they have also been extremely flexible and responsive to the briefs they have received.

The right candidates for programmes – the programmes have been designed to increase the positive impact of staff who are already performing well. A place on the programmes signifies recognition that they have a future career within the sector and that they are likely to move on to work at a higher level than their current position. This means that the learning environment on the programme is strong, supportive and relevant to participants and their peers.

# Costs and savings

Each place on one of the programmes costs colleges up to £1,500 depending on duration. In a sample year, the cost to colleges of putting 55 members of staff through the programmes was £65,100. In addition, resources and professional input from across the Wessex Group are also contributed:

- participating colleges provide meeting space
- Principals (around 16 days) and Vice-Principals (around 15 days) provide input in workshops, panels, mentoring, Executive Group
- Partnership Manager manages programmes.

# SAMPLE COSTS OF PROGRAMMES

A: Cost shared by participating colleges				
Support staff (12 participants)	£6,000			
Future managers (16 participants)	£24,000			
Middle managers (15 participants)	£19,500			
Senior managers (12 participants)	£15,600			
TOTAL	£65,100			
B: Uncharged cost of senior staff input				
Principals	£7,520			
Senior managers	£6,000			
Partnership Manager (45 days)	£9,000			
TOTAL	£22,520			
TOTAL COST	£87,620			

Principals, senior managers and the Partnership Manager do not charge for their contributions. Meeting space is provided free of charge when training takes place in partnership colleges and catering is charged at centrally agreed rates. There are substantial **real and**  notional savings in providing training this way. Travelling time and expenses are minimised as staff do not have to travel far and potentially stay overnight at out-of-county venues on national programmes. The scale of the programme ensures that we can operate economies of scale and attract high quality trainers to our in-house programme and share the costs between colleges. We make good use of college expertise to supplement the content of the programmes, keeping external fees to a minimum.

> The cost of sending a member of staff on an accredited programme run by a national organisation can be up to four times that for a Wessex Group programme<sup>4</sup>. At a saving of around £4,500 per delegate, the partnership has, albeit notionally, saved approximately £250,000 in one year alone.

<sup>4</sup> For example, the LSIS Aspiring Principals and Senior Leaders Programme costs over £6,000 for 14 training days (twice the cost per day of a Wessex Group programme)



Working in Hampshire Portsmouth Southampton

This resource has been written by Liz Winn

www.wessexsfc.ac.uk

Published in 2011 Copyright © Wessex Group of Sixth Form Colleges 2011