



Loyne Learning Alliance: Research and Evaluation 1

Background

The Loyne Learning Alliance (LLA) involves 10 Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools led by the Loyne Specialist School working collaboratively with 13 mainstream primary schools in Lancashire located in the North, East, and Wyre and Fylde districts of Lancashire, we also have one Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and one Children’s Centre. Schools have participated in or benefited from training activities that they have rated highly, see BP 6. Other strategic partners include: University of Cumbria and research and evaluation activity is supported by Lancaster University.

Monitoring research and evaluation activity

The LLA Strategic Steering Group that consists of 3 SEN, 2 Mainstream representatives, University of Cumbria as HEI strategic partner and representatives from Lancashire County Council and the National College receive progress reports on LLA and National College research and evaluation projects. Dr Ann-Marie Houghton (Lancaster University) who is supporting our research and evaluation activity is in attendance to provide more detailed updates and advice.

Evaluation of LLA Activity

In 2012-13 we have gained positive feedback from Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students, teachers and teaching assistants attending a range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions, and schools using Loan Store equipment and work packs. Feedback from 184 participants attending 8 of the above events confirms the quality and impact of our provision, with (109) 59% rating provision excellent and (70) 38% very good. Feedback from SEN training for general ITT students suggests that for some the experience of closer interaction with SEN teachers and pupils has increase SEN knowledge and may have changed some individuals’ views about SEN: *“It will strongly impact on my practice as I have gained lots of SEN knowledge”* - *“...I feel inspired to pursue a career in SEN teaching”*.

Projects

There are four main development projects which are designed to collate and disseminate information and good practice based on audits, action research or evaluation. The focus of the development projects for 2012-13 is based on areas of interest or existing expertise of current LLA members. In addition to the outputs, the key messages for each project will be reported in LLA Newsletters or a series of LLA Briefing Papers (BP). In 2012-13 the four development projects were:

- > **Hearing Impairment Data Research:** designed to establish a database for Hearing Impaired (HI) pupils, being undertaken by the Royal Cross School, whose specialism is HI. (see future BP 2013-14)
- > A **Joint Practice Development** involving five schools (Coppice, Loyne and Redmarsh SEN Schools, Mossgate and Staining Primary Mainstream schools) who are exploring a range of approaches to coaching and peer to peer support. (see BP 3: July 2013)
- > **An action research reflective practice and coaching project** being undertaken by Red Marsh SEN with support from Lancaster University’s Researching Equity, Access and Participation (REAP) group. (see BP 2: June 2013)
- > **Talent Management and Succession Planning** which involves an audit of good practice for wider dissemination across the LLA that is being undertaken by Pear Tree SEN school (See future BP 2013-14).



Members:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| • Grosvenor Park | • Coppice | • Sandylands | • Firbank Children’s Centre | • Underley |
| • Haslingden | • Loyne | • Staining | • Pear Tree | • Holly Grove |
| • Lancaster Road | • Mossgate | • St Mary’s | • Red Marsh | • Newfield |
| • Morecambe Bay | • Ridge | • Westgate | • Royal Cross | • Clifton |
| • University of Cumbria | • Ryelands | • Willow Lane | • Torview | • West Lancs |

School Based Research and Evaluation Projects

The LLA has commissioned Lancaster University's REAP (Researching Equity, Access and Participation) group to support individual schools in undertaking small scale evaluation projects that have the potential for dissemination across the LLA and beyond. Although the Loyne Specialist School has considerable experience in developing and disseminating our own good practice (<http://www.sen-learning-resources.co.uk>), supporting others to research, evaluate and subsequently disseminate good practice, is a new strand of work. Following our experience of an initial pilot with one school we have:

- developed a protocol for negotiating and planning school based evaluation projects, which identifies levels of LLA support, and expected outcomes for the school and LLA;
- successfully supported an evaluation of a collaborative forest school project (see BP 4, August 2013)

Mentoring Support

To build capacity for research and evaluation by individual teachers working in LLA partner schools time has been given to teachers currently studying for academic qualifications. During 2012-13 support has been provided for two teachers, this has consisted of conversations with a university researcher, feedback on writing and opportunities for them to participate in researcher writing days. The benefits of this approach will be evaluated during 2013-14 with respect to individual, school and LLA partnership benefits. (See BP 5, August 2013)

Newly Qualified Teachers - NQT Cluster Group

In conjunction with Lancaster Road Primary School and Grosvenor Park we have established an NQT cluster group. This has been attended by X NQT from x SEN and x mainstream schools. Advice and support together with specialist training offered by LLA members has been given on classroom organization, aspects of SEN, behaviour management, Teacher Standards, and planning and assessment. Informal feedback suggests that NQT have appreciated receiving SEN content as they start their teaching careers.

Specialist Leaders in Education (SLE)

There are 13 SLE from 5 SEN and 4 Mainstream schools within the LLA. These 7 SEN and 6 mainstream teachers offer support to other schools in the curriculum areas of: English, Maths, ICT, Arts and Creativity, Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition there are SLEs able to share expertise in curriculum management, ITT and a range of SEN specialisms including: behaviour, mainstream SEN, Hearing Impairment (HI). The application, recruitment and induction processes for SLE were co-ordinated by Kevin Kendal, Grosvenor Park. To ensure consistency and clarify expectations regarding SLE support we have been piloting the development of booking and evaluation systems.

Briefing Papers 2012-13

All briefing papers will be available on the Loyne Learning Alliance website.

- > BP 2 – Encouraging reflective practice through peer to peer coaching
- > BP 3 – Summary of Joint Practice Development Projects
- > BP 4 – Self Esteem and Forest School Initiative (SEFSI)
- > BP 5 – Evaluation of Impact of Listen and Move
- > BP 6 – Overview of Loyne Specialist School Continuing Professional Development 2012-13



Learning Alliance website: <http://www.loynelearningalliance.co.uk/>
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