

International Real Story

Hornbill School, Brunei



Developing leadership capacity and raising standards in Brunei

Primary school in Brunei chooses BlueSky systems to record and track staff training and raise standards in leadership quality and performance

About the school

Hornbill is a primary school in Brunei catering for service families including the Nepali children of Gurkha soldiers and civilian personnel attached to the military community. It currently has over 320 pupils aged from 3 - 11 years old, 85-90% with English as an additional language (EAL). There is exceptionally high mobility of pupils and staff, linked to military unit moves and operational deployments. It follows the English National Curriculum and is rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted. It is a Service Children Education school, in the Federation of British International Schools in Asia and in the top 150 of UK primaries.

What were the challenges?

Being based 8,000 miles and a 17-hour flight away from the UK, means that the school has to provide most staff CPL and inset training in-house.

The key challenges were:

- To schedule and track internal training, set targets, check impact and ensure maximum value from any

additional external training by disseminating the outcomes to other relevant staff.

- To continue to raise standards in leadership and management by developing leadership capacity at all levels, particularly in quality and performance.
- To cope with large volumes of lesson observation records and performance management targets, significant staff mobility and subsequent production of high numbers of teacher references.
- To reduce paperwork and store INSET/CPL and lesson observations in one place.

"In effect we have to reinvent the school every few years," explained headteacher Craig Gill. "The First and Second Battalions of the Royal Gurkha Rifles each have a 3-4 year tour of Brunei and when they return to the UK we lose the majority of our pupils, along with some office staff and learning support assistants (LSAs) who tend to come from the military families too. In addition, our UK-trained teachers tend to move a lot as Brunei does not suit everyone as a base in the longer term.

“With all our information now tracked, recorded and easily accessible online, life is easier and time is saved for everybody.”

Craig Gill, Headteacher, Hornbill School

How is BlueSky helping?

Hornbill has used BlueSky since 2013, focussing on the following key elements: Teachers Standards, Lesson Observations, CPL and Performance Management.

“I knew that we needed to put INSET/CPL and lesson observations in one place and as soon as I saw BlueSky I realised that it would do all that I wanted and more,” said Craig.

“I had a particular requirement to raise standards in leadership to support our new assistant heads who each manage a learning phase (EYFS, Years 1, 2 and 3 and Years 4, 5 and 6) setting high professional standards for quality and performance.

“I also use the Reports section for feeding back information to our governors. It also helps with end of year reports for our headquarters.”

What is the impact?

“BlueSky is helping so much,” said Craig. “It means everything is in one place for a start. The area where I’ve seen the best result is in holding leaders to account. BlueSky allows me to see clearly areas of strength and weakness in the three different learning phases. I can look for commonalities and ask ‘what are you doing about ‘a’ or ‘b’? I can clearly see strengths against the National Teachers Standards and plan staff meetings in to support the development of new recruits.

“BlueSky has really supported combined target-setting. We use it to record lesson observations and the information collected is mapped directly against the School Improvement Plan and to support self-evaluation.

“Some of this was possible before BlueSky, but it was far less effective, more complicated and very time-consuming. With all our information now tracked, recorded and easily accessible online, life is easier and time is saved for everybody.



Craig Gill, Headteacher, Hornbill School, Brunei.

“When staff leave they always used to ask for a list of the CPL they had completed. Now they are much more involved and aware of their CPL and can easily print their own list from BlueSky.”

“Overall BlueSky makes progression-tracking simpler, which really helps in showing impact. It keeps CPL alive and has made it more worthwhile,” said Craig.

What's next?

“I plan to get all learning support assistants using BlueSky for performance management. I plan to use an adapted version of the lesson observation tool when we observe the LSAs in class working with small groups of children. This means LSAs can link their observations to their PM. Thirdly, I plan to use the 360 review tool next year with middle and senior leaders to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their leadership and review the impact of their role from their learning phases side.”

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Craig Gill, Headteacher, Hornbill School