



Secondary School Real Story

Croesyceiliog School, Torfaen

BlueSky
INVEST IN YOUR STAFF



As easy as CPD...

At Croesyceiliog, sharing best practice internally is improving the quality of teaching and raising standards.

About the school

Croesyceiliog School caters for over 1500 pupils from Cwmbran and surrounding areas in the county of Torfaen. The school is set in sixty acres of woodland and playing fields alongside the Afon Llwyd or Grey River.

The school's 2012 GCSE results placed the school in Band 5. Fuelled to improve, 2013 saw the highest GCSE results in recent memory. 81% of pupils gained Level 2 and 65% including English and maths, improvements of 18% and 22% on the previous year.

What were the challenges?

Following a recommendation in the school's 2011 Estyn report, the then headteacher, restructured the roles of the senior team giving greater focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

As part of this restructuring, Deputy Headteacher Matthew Hutt became responsible for CPD and began streamlining the process by developing a system in Microsoft Excel. At the time, performance management was managed separately with staff collecting evidence

in folders. Forms were completed for lesson observations with an electronic list kept of who had been observed. Without linking the three, it was difficult to analyse staff strengths, ensure robustness of performance management or strategically plan CPD to effectively meet staff need.

"We had begun to improve processes around staff performance management and CPD but they still relied on lots of paper. Attempts to tighten up performance management were difficult with information in different places and not stored electronically."

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Matthew Hutt, Deputy Headteacher

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How is BlueSky helping?

“I saw another school presenting their use of BlueSky and realised it was exactly what we needed. We have been using the system for two years, starting with performance management. Each member of staff works with their line manager to set three objectives for that year all to support overall school objectives. One is linked to pupil progress, another linked to departmental objectives and the other to literacy or numeracy. We don't ask staff to follow the teacher standards but we can do if this becomes necessary. We store all of our documentation relating to performance management and teaching and learning within BlueSky, keeping it all in one place and making it accessible to staff.

“One year into using the system, we began using the lesson observation area adding our own proforma. Staff observe lessons using a paper version of this form and then type this and their notes into the online form on BlueSky, giving them time to clarify their thoughts.

What impact is BlueSky having?

“We observe different elements within lessons such as quality of questioning and use of assessment information. Using BlueSky means we can analyse each element across groups of staff or the whole school and see how teachers are performing against them. I present data from BlueSky to our teaching and learning governor sub-committee, giving them a high level view of the quality of teaching across the school.

“Over time the number of external courses staff attend has fallen. This is happening because the data in BlueSky highlights staff strengths and we match these

with staff need. Every year, staff lead 40 one hour twilight in-house training sessions. Staff choose to attend five and this counts as one INSET day. We call them BlueSky sessions.

“Each year, more and more people offer to deliver sessions, it's enjoyable and they like doing it. Staff prefer to learn from colleagues as they can speak to them afterwards. It empowers staff and is saving the school money, we only send staff on external courses when it's really necessary.

“Our requirement is to have a successful and robust performance management cycle and BlueSky enables us to do this. Our results in 2013 are testament to the improvements we are making to the quality of teaching.”

What's next?

“We currently record work scrutiny exercises outside of BlueSky and will be looking at the new self-evaluation module so we can move this into the system.”

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Matthew Hutt, Deputy Headteacher

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