



A National Teaching Academy Ringwood School

BlueSky



Streamlining teacher training at Ringwood School – A National Teaching Academy

BlueSky provides an invaluable performance management facility, monitoring impact and spend in one system

About the school

The Ringwood School is an 11-19 National Teaching Academy in Ringwood, Hampshire. In 2011 it became one of the UK's first 'Teaching Schools', charged with driving improvement in the quality of professional practice and improving the attainment of every child. It works collaboratively with an alliance of local primary and secondary schools and specifically supports the School Direct ITT programme, supervised by the University of Southampton. Rated 'Good' by Ofsted, the school's GCSE results are consistently above national and Hampshire averages. A-level performance is particularly strong and the school is ranked in the top 5% of post-16 providers. It has 1,650 students and 200 teaching and support staff.

What were the challenges?

"We are a large school with over 200 full and part-time teachers and support staff and overseeing performance management for that number of people is a huge job," said Ringwood School's Deputy Head Teacher Clare Adams.

"Also, as the lead school in our alliance, we place trainee teachers with our partnership schools and need to keep a careful track on their progress,

including all the evidence of their practice.

"I initiated the purchase of BlueSky over six years ago after seeing the system demonstrated at a Hampshire CPD event. At that time I was an Assistant Head, overseeing performance management using a paper-based system. It was simply impossible for one person to file all of that material manually. As I'm also an IT teacher, I could see the benefits of working online immediately and requested that we bought BlueSky.

How is BlueSky helping?

"My main objective was to find a system that put staff in charge of their own performance management, because I believe that performance management is the responsibility of the individual, rather than the organisation. BlueSky supports that absolutely.

"Secondly it provides a great mechanism for inputting and reporting on lesson observations and outcomes.

"It also allows support staff the opportunity to have a 360 audit that enables them to get feedback on their performance so that they feel part of the process. Being able to devise the questions for the 360 was also really useful so that it fitted with the school context.

“Overall it is a great management tool and allows me to monitor the CPD impact and spend in one central system.”

Clare Adams, Deputy Head Teacher, Ringwood School.



“In the last year we have added the Self-Evaluation module and this is proving really valuable, particularly where we use it for book scrutiny and learning walks.

What is the impact?

“Overall it is a great management tool and allows me to monitor the CPD impact and spend in one central system. Having started off using BlueSky to support colleagues to evidence their threshold applications, it was an easy transition to move to use it for performance-related pay. The support staff appraisal system has also benefited from being driven through BlueSky, allowing colleagues to use the 360 review which has facilitated a better dialogue, especially for a colleague at the top of their pay scale as it flags things such as team working, effectiveness and efficiency and changes in practice.

“This year alone we have 21 School Direct trainee teachers and we give every one of them an account which they use to collect evidence against the teaching standards. It is a great portable portfolio for them and the University of Southampton has access to each account, making the logistics far simpler. The trainee’s second school can see what the first school mentor has been advising, which makes their transition seamless and is working really well.

“We have also used ‘Projects’ for Schools Direct professionally-themed events. Recently I had problems setting up a face-to-face training session, so I shared a video and some documents and

resources and it was used as a discussion group which I kept checking into during the day. It worked really well and saved cancelling a session.

“The time-saving is incredible, particularly in running reports. BlueSky is invaluable from a leadership point of view. I love the security of knowing all the information is there online and know I will be a life-long user.

What’s next?

“BlueSky is great at making modifications based on feedback – for example we recently had the grading put in so that funding revenue and quality of teaching matched up. We would like to do more customisation, such as linking to other data so that for example we could pull across pupil achievement scores to link with teachers.”

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Clare Adams, Deputy Head Teacher, Ringwood School.