



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
Scotland

SEAMAB SCHOOL

THEMED REVIEW

FEEDBACK REPORT

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Assessor: June Smith
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OUTCOME

In the Assessor's judgement Seamab School continues to meet the Investors in People Standard. Seamab School also meets a range of evidence requirements at higher levels of the Standard. These are identified in Appendix 1.

GENERAL STRENGTHS AND AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

There are indeed strengths within the school; not least of which is the commitment and dedication of the management team to ensuring the school continues to be a caring and nurturing place, both for the children and the staff alike. It was apparent from initial discussions that staff are very much valued, and a realisation that they need to be looked after in order to fulfil their roles within the school as well as be successful out-with their work roles. Interviews with staff very much confirmed a caring and nurturing approach, with staff commenting on how much they enjoyed their roles.

The quality of the work carried out with the children including their school and after school lives is to be commended, with lots of examples of stimulating activities taking place: *"How our children progress depends on our staff"*.

There are many examples of the care staff and the teaching staff interacting more and sharing information, which is having a positive impact on the children's care. It is considered a priority that knowledge is shared across the organisation for the benefit of all who have a role to play on the success of the organisation.

One of the specific areas Seamab was keen to receive feedback on was in relation to work-life balance and the following comment sums up the overall view of those interviewed: *"They couldn't do more for me re work-life balance"*. There were many additional examples provided to suggest that work-life balance is important to the management, including the feeling that: *"They try to build people's interests into their job"*

"Work-life balance is part of the culture"

The Assessor was also impressed by the de-briefs which are held at the end of shifts, which is an opportunity for staff to offload any areas of concern or issues before they go home, in the hope that they do not take their worries home with them. These sessions are seen to be working well with the benefit of staff being able to relax more at home.

The opportunity for staff to make use of a Counsellor is to be commended as this provided staff with the opportunity to chat with an independent person and therefore be as open as they are able to be about any issues impacting on their role.

Communication is seen to be improving within the school and as one person stated: *"You are only ever 24 hours from finding things out"*

There is a culture of challenging current practice within the school, which is resulting in ownership for decisions which will improve the way things are done. This comes from the top and was very much echoed during the onsite activity: *"Open and challenging ethos"*

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK AGAINST YOUR ORGANISATION'S PRIORITIES

The main priorities for the organisation to receive feedback on were as follows:

Work-life Balance

The planning session highlighted that the SMT would like feedback on work-life balance as a whole and in particular whether overtime working was an issue with staff. Some measures were put in place to ensure that this was continually recorded, details of which have been documented for the school to work with.

Feedback from staff was extremely positive with respect to work-life balance, with staff feeling that the debriefing sessions, effective rota planning and the use of counsellors were all effective in ensuring that people were able to be successful in both their home and work lives. There were many examples of staff being allowed to fit their rotas around other things in their lives, for example sports and fitness activities, commitments around their children, xxx

"Staff are so dedicated; they wouldn't like to see the school suffer"

One area of difficulty for staff relates to having to cover sickness, which can leave an individual feeling obliged to stay on until a replacement can be found, in the interests of the children. There may be a benefit in trying to look for a way around this by monitoring the reason for sickness and trying where possible to reduce this.

There were many more positive examples in relation to work-life balance being supported

including paid paternity leave, and being off the rota on football nights.

"The debriefs mean you don't take anything home with you"

"You never go home with a niggle"

The school is to be commended for its approach to work-life balance and is encouraged to continue to seek innovative ways of addressing this important area. **(Indicator 3)**

Continuous Development

Although it was felt by the SMT that they were good at meeting the core development needs of their staff there was a feeling that there might be room for improvement in encouraging staff to come forward with development out-with the core requirement for their roles. The management team were keen to encourage people at all levels to identify any additional development which interested them and which could benefit both the staff member and also the school. Again some measures were identified and feedback was sought during the onsite activity. The team meetings are being effectively used as a forum for sharing learning as are opportunities to work with different team leaders and seniors, who have differing skills and approaches. All of the comments and findings from the review confirmed that the school promotes continuous development in order: *"to be the best we can be, a centre of excellence and be known for what we do"*. There is substantial evidence of the principal acting as an excellent role model for continuous learning: *"I know what I want from the school and I know what I want the children to experience when at the school"* This results in staff feeling comfortable in suggesting any future development activities which might benefit the children, and a feeling that there is a real culture of continuous improvement. Other positive progress relates to the involvement of the care staff in the education of the children, with a programme of support in place and 6-weekly sharing of ideas on the children, between the care staff and the teaching staff.

"We share learning from courses at team meetings"

"At daily de-briefings"

"I am comfortable in sharing knowledge, staff meetings and supervisions are used to promote this"

"This is down to personal preference and time"

"I am a great believer in continued learning"

"They need to know I am learning every day"

At the time of this review there were many development activities taking place, including:

- HNC in Social Care/Residential Care
- SVQ level 3 in Care
- Social Work Degrees

- Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI)
- Child Protection
- Attachment Theory
- First Aid
- Food Hygiene

The whole area of continuous learning is very much at the heart of the culture of the organisation and this is well known to all. **(Indicator 8, Indicator 2 level 4, ERs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)**

Communication

One of the senior management team was fairly new to the organisation and identified a requirement to receive feedback from staff about the format, frequency and source of information provided to staff. Information on how communication could be improved was sought and the results were overall positive. With people feeling that they did receive all of the information they needed in largely the correct format. There was a suggestion that e-mail communication for the care staff was not always the best method, particularly for night staff, who may not have access to e-mail whilst other staff and the children were sleeping for fear of disturbing them. There is a culture of challenging current practice within the school and this is further aiding communication. Comments from the interviewees very much suggested that communication has greatly improved, with many feeling it was good.

“Communication from teacher to bungalow has vastly improved”

“Good proformas and routines starting, it is super now”

“Actively listening to folk”

“Communication is a strength”

(Indicator 7 and 8, Levels 2/3)

FEEDBACK AGAINST OTHER AGREED OBJECTIVES

The additional objectives identified prior to the onsite activity were again relating to learning and development, in particular there was a request to establish whether staff felt they got all of the training they needed to carry out their roles effectively or whether there was any further development they would like. The findings were that staff did receive all of the development they needed with many mentioning such things as included above.

POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Feedback from the onsite interviews identified the following areas for further development within the school:

As the team-leader level staff are still operationally based, there can be a conflict in terms of time being available for the planning and paper-based side of the role. There would be a benefit in freeing up some of the time of the team leaders and seniors to undertake this important planning activity.

It was felt that there can be a lack of confidence on the part of new staff when preparing care plans for their children and therefore more assistance in this would benefit the team member by increasing their confidence.

Although staff all felt valued and appreciated, there appears to be a lack of opportunity to receive feedback on excellent pieces of work carried out with the children. The school would benefit from putting in place a mechanism to capture this and to give recognition for these achievements.

There is a relatively new teaching team within the school. There would be a benefit in developing an appropriate CPD programme to meet the needs of their CPD requirement.

There is recognition within one of the bungalows that communication internally is not always the best. It was decided by the interviewees at the onsite interviews that those involved were going to remedy this themselves.

Although communication between teaching staff and care staff is much improved, it was still felt that this could be improved further in particular in relation to teacher/key-worker contact. It was also felt that: *"We could benefit from whole organisation meetings"*. A new member of the senior team would be keen to receive more feedback on communication and this should be encouraged, perhaps by getting people to contribute more at meetings.

Although, to the school's credit, the feedback against the objectives above was positive, it would be good practice to carry out the actions identified in the planning session, for example carrying out staff surveys to measure work-life balance impact, ensuring management lead by example relating to work-life balance,

There would be a real benefit in looking at aspects of profile which interest the school and which would provide stretch to the team. This could include doing a self review against the unshaded areas below by use of feedback from the staff on how they would rate the organisation on any particular area identified. Where further work is required in order to meet a particular requirement, the evidence statement could be used as the required outcome, with the goal being to achieve a grid fully shaded in green.

Target date for the next visit by the Assessor: 2011

Provisional date for next Investors in People Review: 2011

Appendix 1 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE FRAMEWORK EVIDENCE MATRIX

KEY:

GOOD PRACTICE IS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED
GOOD PRACTICE IS DEVELOPING
GOOD PRACTICE HAS NOT YET COMMENCED
NOT CONSIDERED AT THIS VISIT
EVIDENCE NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS GROUP

A foundation of good practice: Summary of findings at Level 1

Indicator	Summary of requirement	Evidence		
		Top Managers	Managers	People
1	A clear purpose, vision and strategy for improvement			
	A business plan with measurable objectives			
	Involving people in developing plans			
	Understanding of objectives			
	Relationships with representative groups			
2	Planning to meet organisational and team learning and development needs			
	Planning to meet individual development needs			
3	Encouraging the contribution of ideas			
	Recognising different needs and ensuring fair access to support and development			
4	Being clear about the capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people			
	Having plans to ensure managers have these capabilities			
5	Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people			
	People get constructive feedback			
6	Recognising and valuing people's contribution			
	People believe they make a positive difference			
7	Encouraging involvement in decision making			
	Encouraging ownership and responsibility			
8	People's learning needs are met			
	People's learning has been effective			
	Induction helps those new to their roles to be effective			
9	Clarity about the investment of time, money and other resources			
	Can demonstrate improvement as a result of the investment at organisational, team and individual level.			
10	Evaluation is used to make improvements to the approach to leading, managing and developing people			

Excellent practice: Summary of findings at Levels 2 and 3

Indicator	Summary of requirement	Evidence		
		Top Managers	Managers	People
1	A clear set of core values, understood throughout the organisation			
	Involving people in the development of strategy			
	Using KPIs to improve performance			
	Taking account of social responsibilities			
2	A learning and development strategy which builds the capability to achieve the vision			
	Involving people in identifying team development needs			
	Taking account of individual learning styles			
	People are clear about how team development will help the organisation			
	People feel a sense of responsibility for their own learning			
3	Innovation and flexibility are included in the learning strategy			
	Recruitment and selection is fair and effective			
	People's differences are valued and equality and diversity are effectively promoted and managed			
	Work-life balance is effectively supported to meet organisational and individual needs			
	Giving and receiving constructive feedback is valued			
4	The structure allows people to make the most of their talents in order to achieve the strategy			
	There is clarity about the current and future capabilities managers need			
	Managers are reviewed against these capabilities			
5	Managers are provided with the help they need to acquire these capabilities			
	Top managers act as role models of the capabilities			
	Managers lead, manage and develop people in line with the core values			
	Top managers act as role models for team working and sharing information			
	Working together and sharing knowledge is encouraged			
	People are helped to plan their careers			
	Coaching is used to help people achieve their potential			
	Managers act on constructive feedback from their people			
6	Managers are respected and trusted			
	People have confidence in top managers			
	A clear and fair reward and recognition strategy, developed through involvement of managers and representatives			
	The strategy is applied fairly and is understood			
	Managers understand what motivates their people			
7	People describe the strategy as fair and motivating			
	Individual and team successes are celebrated			
	Effective consultation arrangements encourage participation in decision-making			
	People receive the support they need to make decisions, and they feel trusted to make decisions			
8	Effective communication encourages the sharing of knowledge and information			
	People are committed to the success of the organisation.			
	Effective use is made of internal and external resources for learning and development			
	Flexible, innovative and cost-effective solutions are used to meet learning needs			
	Knowledge and learning is shared			
8	Learning and development opportunities help people achieve their full potential			
	People are motivated to learn			

	People are well supported in putting new skills into practice			
	Learning achievements are celebrated			
	Learning is an everyday activity			
9	The contribution that people management strategies make to organisational performance is measured and evaluated			
	Managers are involved in this evaluation			
	The impact on KPIs can be described			
	Examples of improvements in performance can be given			
10	Self-review is used to improve strategies for managing and developing people.			
	External review is used to inform the development of people management strategies			
	Effective feedback methods are used to understand people's needs and views and to highlight areas for improvement			
	Effective methods are used to understand people's view of how they are led and managed			
	People are involved in identifying improvements to the way they are led and managed			
	People believe managers are committed to improving the way they manage and develop people			

Exceptional practice: Summary of findings at Level 4

Indicator	Summary of requirement	Evidence		
		Top Managers	Managers	People
1	Core values are at the heart of strategy and govern how the organisation operates			
	People believe in and share the core values			
	Social responsibility is part of the culture			
2	There is a culture of continuous learning, and developing skills and knowledge is promoted at every level			
	Managers act as role models for continuous learning			
3	Recruitment and selection strategies link to the business strategy, ensuring there is a talented and diverse workforce			
	Managers play a role in recruiting people with values which match the organisation's			
	People's views are taken into account when recruiting team members			
	Equality and diversity strategies link to the business strategy			
	Diversity is valued in an environment where people's unique talents are used to the full			
	Work-life balance strategies link to the business strategy and are part of the culture			
	Managers describe how they apply work-life balance strategies creatively for mutual benefit			
4	The leadership and management strategy links to the business strategy and to external good practice			
	Everyone is encouraged to develop leadership capabilities			
5	Top managers act as role models and are regarded as inspirational leaders with an honest and trusting style.			
	Managers act as inspirational leaders			
	People believe there is a culture of openness and trust			
	Coaching is part of the culture			
6	Rewards and recognition strategies link to the business strategy and are externally benchmarked			
	People are involved in developing the reward and recognition strategy			
	There is a forward-thinking benefits strategy, with policies that go beyond legal requirements			
	People are encouraged to recognise the contribution made by their colleagues			
7	Consultation and involvement is part of the culture			
	People are involved in designing consultation arrangements			

	There is a culture of continuous improvement, where people can challenge the way things work			
	People have a sense of ownership and pride			
8	All learning is valued			
	Managers support people in their personal development activities			
	Mentoring opportunities are available			
9	There is a flexible and effective approach to measuring the return on investment in people strategies			
	The return on investment in people is reported to all stakeholders			
	People describe how investment in people has improved the organisation's performance			
10	Internal and external benchmarking is used to review and improve people management strategies			
	People's views of how they are managed and developed has improved			
	People confirm that improvements have been made as a result of their feedback			
	People believe the organisation is a great place to work			