

PfS Teacher Recruitment, Training and Retention

Identified Problem

Newly emergent centres, in particular where there is only one member of teaching staff, may identify a potential problem of how to manage the core service of delivering high quality *Playing for Success (PfS)* sessions while at the same time being aware of potential issues that may arise eg -

- absence through illness
- other local authority commitments, such as training
- how to initiate daytime delivery
- how to find the right member of staff if appointing.

While at the same time not wanting to compromise on the quality of *PfS* delivery with agency cover staff or teachers without knowledge of the ethos of *PfS*, the following solution came about through a proactive review based on the need for high quality *PfS* teachers and teacher training.

Solution

To intensively train a small number of teachers each year who could meet the needs of the children in our centres and achieve the important goals of raising achievement in numeracy, literacy and ICT.

Implementation

We advertised a training course in the local newspapers with details of how to apply.

(We have since only needed to advertise this in the local authority (LA) 'Gold Sheet' weekly bulletin for schools, hence saving money).

The aim in short was to recruit enthusiastic teachers with two years or more experience looking for experience out of the classroom. This has been expanded to include newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and we termed all these teachers as 'Teaching Partners' (TPs). A short informal interview took place and of those seen approximately 50% were taken on in the first and second terms of this scheme.

The Course

Stage 1

Those selected came out of school for two days (in the first two or three terms of the scheme we paid schools cover to release staff but have since found they would allow them to come anyway, now the benefit is proven).

Those days consisted of an induction into *PfS* as follows -

- We went over the history and background of *PfS* locally and nationally.

We introduced the Study Support concept and the Study Support Code of Practice and the QiSS recognition process.

There were training slots from LA consultants in Numeracy, Literacy and ICT and visits from other local *PfS* centre managers (CMs) to share ideas and give more of an idea of the scope of *PfS*.

We ran through typical *PfS* sessions and showed many activities that we had had success with.

We trained on our centre specific software which was totally new to the majority of school teachers.

Stage 2

We were very clear with the teachers about our expectations of them within the next term – They would attend ten sessions (a typical Derby *PfS* term at that time) and during the first/second sessions with us they could just observe and become acquainted with the 'feel' of the sessions.

During weeks 3-6 we would give responsibility for some small group activities over to the TP. Then in weeks 6-8 they would plan and implement their own ideas into a session and take the whole group under our supervision. These curriculum plans were to be shared with the CM beforehand and resources made available if necessary.

The assessment of that session was self-evaluation from the TP and then feedback in a one-to-one meeting with the CM. They were asked to assess the lesson on objectives they had set and to show how they could improve it for next time. All of these lesson plans and materials were kept by the centre for future use.

Stage 3

The TPs were not paid for their time at the centre but upon completion of the course they received a £312 one off training grant. This reflected the ethos of *PfS* very well and when calculated pro-rata on a teacher's hourly rate came to less than 30% of what we would have paid for a cover teacher; we would have had to pay approximately three times more for a cover teacher for the same hours. The payment was also exempt from on-costs such as tax and NI due to the fact it was a one off training allowance.

During the term we had a drop-off of about 25% of our TPs. This was due to a mixture of school commitments, family issues and the fact that a number of teachers wanted to be given a timetable and a plan of what to teach and at what time (as per the national curriculum); they were unwilling to take on the challenge of developing the curriculum for the needs of a group. We felt these were probably unsuitable as *PfS* teachers anyway and this was a form of self-selection.

Of those that were left, every single one was committed to *PfS* and had embraced the ethos completely. These TPs were invited to an awards evening and given a certificate signed by the Director of Education for the city.

These new colleagues were then offered the opportunity to come back to the centre to take a series of sessions or a term and to help with Summer Schools and daytime provision for example. While the centre does not ask for a formal commitment it has benefited from a number of longstanding arrangements including a TP who continues to provide one night every week and another TP who was with us for a whole year before moving on.

Benefits

It became apparent that the benefits worked both ways, with the teachers bringing vibrant new ideas from school, and their more recent PGCE experience in some cases. The staff also brought with them news and updates on current national strategy and initiatives. TPs have taken back into schools expertise based on the software training they have gained during their secondment to the centre and introduced this *PfS* practice. Additional support from the centre includes the loan of the necessary kit.

The scheme is cost effective and sustainable as shown by the fact that we are working with our sixth cohort this term (Spring 2008), proactive and has an added benefit of forging very strong links with the partner schools and staff. The centre manager can also be freed up to work on funding, daytime provision and curriculum development to enhance the work of the centre.

Jeremy Biddulph – centre manager – Derbyshire CCC - March 2008