



Bespoke support

Primary Cluster – North Staffordshire

A Cluster group of primary schools used funding through the Intensive Bursaries to promote science across its schools and to develop teachers' knowledge and skills in assessment and working scientifically. The CPD undertaken has improved confidence in teaching science, particularly in relation to assessing and tracking progress made by pupils in science, and has enabled best practice to be shared.

The cluster is led by a secondary school (Teaching School Alliance and Multi-Academy Trust) and includes six feeder primary schools in the North Staffordshire area. Collectively, these primary schools have approx.1000 pupils between the ages of 3 and 11.

The Cluster wanted to promote science across its schools, and was keen for science to become a high profile element of its schools' identity. To that end, a need for CPD focusing on assessment, tracking and progress, and the new primary curriculum was identified. Individual members of the cluster had already attended CPD through their local Science Learning Partnership, however an Intensive Bursary provided funding of the opportunity to undertake the further CPD with the National Science Learning Network.

Our Support

The Cluster decided to send members of staff from their schools to two different CPD activities provided by Keele Science Learning Partnership. Five members of staff attended a course on assessment and progression, with four of these attending a further course on working scientifically in the new curriculum.

All members of staff rated the courses very highly will all delegates reported that the learning outcomes had been met and that the course was useful and relevant to their classroom practice. They were particularly pleased that the courses provided them with space to reflect on changes to the primary curriculum and to focus on working scientifically, and how they might implement these ideas across their schools.

Impact

Staff members who attended the CPD reported an improved confidence in science teaching; and have since met regularly to share practice and their experiences utilising the skills they have learnt. The impact of this CPD has been reported both on themselves and other members of staff within the schools. Within the primary cluster this has further fostered confidence, particularly in relation to assessing and tracking progress made by pupils.

The teachers have applied their new knowledge and skills to their classroom practices in the following ways:

- use of tools made available on the courses to track progress and attainment now used across all schools in the cluster
- regular science meetings established, which allow members of staff from across the cluster to discuss and share practice, particularly across year groups in different schools.
- gained knowledge of short simple activities to encourage scientific enquiry and regularly include these in lessons
- use of 'quick enquiry' starters in science lessons by all members of staff, not just those who attended the courses

- trialling of resources in Science Co-ordinators' classrooms before rolling out to the rest of the school – eventually a shared bank of resources will be available to all schools

Following on for the support providing by the National Science Learning Network a clear strategy for science learning has now been devised for use across the schools in the cluster. All the primary schools are tracking progress and attainment using some of the tools demonstrated on the CPD activities provided by the Science Learning Partnership. The biggest impact is that all schools in the cluster have a shared strategy for science teaching, which enables practice and achievements to be shared between staff members from all schools within the cluster.