

Case study: Use of the additional professional learning grant in 2018/19 and 2019/20

Context and background

The school

King Henry VIII school is an English-medium school in Monmouthshire and is part of the Education Achievement Service (EAS). The school has 968 learners on roll: 13.5 per cent are eligible for free school meals (FSM); 25.86 per cent have additional learning needs (ALN); 2.58 per cent have English as an alternative language (EAL); and 23.19 per cent are global A* and A grade learners, regarded as more able and talented. The gender split in the school is 51 per cent boys and 49 per cent girls.

Designated leaders and members of teaching staff

The senior leadership team has six members of staff with 31 in other TLR posts. There are 61.47 teachers as well as 12.4 teaching assistants.

Additional professional learning grant allocation

The school received £24,077 for 2018/19 and £36,423 for 2019/20.

How the additional grant was used

Staff training – preparation for the new curriculum/leadership development

The additional professional learning (PL) grant was used to fund a number of different projects in King Henry VIII to develop staff's understanding of the new requirements around learning, teaching and assessment in the new curriculum. A new school vision was created which encouraged the following:

- staff engagement with the professional standards for teaching and leadership through in-school PL and teaching assistants' engagement with the Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway (TALP) programme
- leaders' reflection on current strengths of in-house peer review leading to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment
- leaders co-constructing a peer enquiry cycle supported by regions that encompassed peer review and was underpinned by action research to develop a high quality education profession.

Collaboration

King Henry VIII also used the additional funding to facilitate school-to-school working. Key activities included:

- cross-regional and cluster working on activities such as; schools as learning organisations audit; newly qualified teacher professional learning programme; engagement events and meetings to ensure key messages were accurately disseminated across the Abergavenny cluster
- creating a cluster mathematics project for cross phase teaching that developed a clear understanding of learner numeracy progression
- PL cluster development of oracy pedagogy
- collaboration between middle leaders across the cluster to share best practice.

Leadership

To ensure the staff possessed the necessary skills to lead and meet the challenges of the new curriculum, King Henry VIII used the additional funding to provide a coaching programme for middle and senior leaders to mentor and encourage others within the school to thrive.

Health and well-being

King Henry VIII actively engaged on a school, local authority and regional basis to promote learner well-being across the school community through:

- engaging in cluster PL on adverse childhood experiences
- staff engagement in regional well-being events to develop a strong network of practice with other schools
- securing additional leadership capacity of cluster ALN working to ensure common best practice across all schools
- senior leader engagement in EAS vulnerable learner project.

Impact of the grant on colleagues across the school

The additional funding gave the school the time and opportunity for teachers and teaching assistants to work together to focus on action enquiry to evaluate and improve pedagogical aspects of the areas of learning and experience. Working with other schools and external experts was also beneficial in making the links between the well-being/adverse childhood experience agenda and the pedagogy of their subject discipline in the classroom. This new way of working increased staff confidence and enjoyment in their roles.

Impact of the grant on learners

There have been a number of interesting impacts on learners because of the additional funding. The development of cross-phase teaching of mathematics and cluster numeracy pedagogy led to a positive learner perception across the school and reduced any gender differences to negligible levels. Through the school vision, engagement in learner voice, literacy and numeracy cluster work and development of a personal development curriculum, learners engaged with and enjoyed their new way of working, developing the necessary traits to inform the four purposes.

Lessons learned about PL to share with other schools

King Henry VIII learnt that strong strategic planning was crucial in ensuring clarity across the school. Development plan actions were condensed in to termly activities with a focus on staff development. Communication was also key, with more emphasis on keeping learners and parents/carers informed.

Next steps

Staff at King Henry VIII intend to continue their Peer Enquiry Cycle work, engaging with the Abergavenny cluster and national projects to develop and trial new approaches to learning and teaching using the INSET allocation and funding from the additional PL grant.