

## **Education and Employer Taskforce Guidance: Implementing NCEE Recommendation Two - Responsibility for developing employer partnerships**

The Government is encouraging schools to think how they can best use employers to improve learning outcomes and further strengthen governing bodies through the skills and experiences they can offer. This was the rationale behind the recommendations of the National Council for Educational Excellence in 2008, one of which was that:

*'Schools and colleges should identify a member of the leadership team to be responsible for creating, managing and developing relationships with business. This should deliver the business contributions to the National Framework clearly linked into the school or college's policy on Economic Well-Being in the curriculum.'*

The Government accepted this recommendation and included it in its White Paper 'Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future'. The White Paper also stated that there should be a Governor with responsibility for developing employer partnerships:

*'We expect every school to develop effective relationships with employers and have a member of the governing body and senior leadership team responsible for business partnerships.'* (para 3.33)

In 2009 the Education and Employer Task Force convened a working group of current experts and representatives of organisations operating in the field in order to:

- identify benefits and barriers to the implementation of the recommendation;
- suggest a set of options for taking the recommendation forward; and
- draft guidance for school and college leaders.

It is clear that there is a general consensus within the education sector that employers can help schools and colleges deliver better outcomes for young people, and there is a growing body of evidence supporting this. Effective partnerships help schools deliver some of their statutory responsibilities for work-related learning and the 14-19 reforms.

But while there is consensus on the value of partnerships, it is also evident that there is no 'one size fits all' way of developing effective partnerships between schools, colleges and employers. Many factors may vary the approach that will best suit an individual school and it rightly remains the decision of each school and college to identify the strategies that will be most effective for them. The organisations involved in the working group have identified many schools already doing excellent work in this area in many different ways. Below are some examples of successful approaches to making a member of the senior leadership team responsible for developing employer partnerships, with a view to stimulating the thinking of schools and colleges keen to better develop their own relationships. The following guidance has been approved by the working group that includes: ASCL, BITC, CBI, DCSF, HTI and NAHT.

### **Why partnership with employers may be improved if a senior staff member takes responsibility**

Many schools generate a range of one-off relationships with individual employers on an ad hoc basis. Relationships may develop in response to a specific short-term need or in

response to curriculum requirements. Individual members of staff take on the management of relationships in addition to their existing workload.

This approach can lead to a number of difficulties, including:

- Developing one-off relationships rather than taking a strategic approach to engaging employers can limit the breadth of opportunities available to young people across the curriculum, enterprise learning agenda and work-related learning.
- Individual teachers might initiate contacts with employers they are not able to follow through as they do not have the authority of the senior management team of the school.

SMT buy-in is critical to a school taking a strategic approach to employer relationships and developing an approach that reaches all students. It is equally important for employers to engage senior managers in developing a strategic approach on their part.

### **Choosing the right person**

There are no hard and fast rules about identifying the right person to lead the development of a school's partnerships with employers. Most are existing members of the senior staff, including school bursars or business managers. Some groups of schools work together to appoint a lead partnership manager. The role will vary but the common skills, attitudes and characteristics required to lead the development of partnerships include the following:

- Without the authority to make decisions, developing effective partnerships is unlikely to succeed.
- The person responsible should:
  - Be committed to taking on the role.
  - Have good communication skills and the ability to persuade, negotiate and argue a case.
  - Have enthusiasm and an ability to recognise opportunities, allied with a creativity to turn them into relationships.
  - Have some understanding of business and the needs and motivations of all types of employer. This does not rule out existing members of staff.
  - Be allocated time to allow for the commitment and focus required.
  - Have a good, strategic understanding of the wider needs of the school.

Schools have a right to expect that the senior manager of the employer should have similar skills and a reciprocal understanding of schools.

Increasingly schools work in clusters or federations. There are examples of success where a number of schools work together to fund and support a senior post to develop employer partnerships. In these cases, it is important for the appointee to be flexible to the needs of each school, college or academy in the cluster.

Colleges will often take a different approach; where a small rural primary school may be unlikely to have a member of staff with responsibility for developing employer partnerships – let alone a dedicated member of staff – it is the norm in larger colleges of further education to appoint staff specifically devoted to this activity.

There are sources of help to discuss the role and expectations that schools and employers may have of the role and of each other, including IEBC ([www.iebe.org.uk](http://www.iebe.org.uk)) and HTI ([www.hti.org.uk](http://www.hti.org.uk)).

**WENDY BRISCOE, HEADTEACHER, QUEEN VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL, DUDLEY**

Queen Victoria Primary School is in Dudley and Wendy Briscoe is the Head Teacher. She was previously head at Graiseley Primary in Wolverhampton. Her belief that schools can become isolated from the community if they don't involve business led her to develop strong relationships with employers at Graiseley and she is now setting out on the same path at her new school.

*"If children are to be successful and confident learners, and responsible citizens later in life, then they have to be encouraged to aspire. Business is a huge resource that is often underused by schools and one that is incredibly important to the curriculum"* she said.

At Graiseley, in the school's creative curriculum, in enterprise projects and in the many child-generated activities, the children gained enormous experience in the soft skills of employability – working in teams, problem solving, negotiating, building relationships with people outside their immediate circle.

*"You can't start too early with that,"* said Wendy.

Graiseley has about 200 pupils, and Wendy took responsibility herself for building and maintaining links with employers: *"In a small school it makes sense for it to be the head. I was able to show the way and other teachers understood the importance that I placed upon it. Every class, including nursery, carried out at least one enterprise project"*

At Queen Victoria, a larger school, she is about to allocate the responsibility to another member of the senior team: *"The non-teaching timetable of an Assistant Head allows them to spend some time dedicated to this role. It may only be so many hours per half-term, but they will also spend time on phone calls, some meetings and feeding back to senior management."*

*"Enterprise attitudes need to go across the curriculum and the school. We want to help change the mindset of children in an area where aspiration can be low. The exposure to new role models, of understanding what work is about, is vital to the chances of our children"*.

In the first weeks of a new school year the children themselves seem to be on board with the idea. When asked what they wanted to learn about, a first response was *"how to get a job"*.

**GERARD LISTON, DIRECTOR OF ENTERPRISE,  
LAISTERDYKE BUSINESS & ENTERPRISE COLLEGE, BRADFORD**

Laisterdyke Business & Enterprise College was the first school in Bradford to be awarded Business & Enterprise specialist status. Gerard's role was advertised as a result of this as 'Director of Enterprise'. The job description was a fairly tall order and had originally requested a significant amount of teaching experience (10-20 years) with some in a senior role plus considerable business experience. Gerard pointed out that such candidates are few and far between – his own experience encompassed 15 years running his own businesses plus a significant amount of time working for large corporates followed by a change of direction when he decided to take a PGCE and become a teacher.

His role does not comprise any actual timetabled teaching, however, the teaching element is crucial as he explained there is definitely a requirement to be able to plan and take lessons.

Gerard's full role is to engage every single young person in the school in the employability, enterprise and work-related agenda – he has no separate subject-teaching responsibilities. His three key objectives are:

- **Employer Engagement:** Gerard is not the sole representative for this but he takes the lead in creating links with local businesses and identifying opportunities to work with them. This requires someone who will understand what businesses need as well as what the school wants to achieve, and it requires elements of creativity and ambition to look at different ways of engaging. Gerard was very clear that this is not a role which just involves picking up the phone to the local EBP to arrange something work-related.
- **Enterprise Education:** There is a statutory requirement for 5 days' work-related learning; however, at Laisterdyke they are keen to take all their pupils on an Employability Learning Journey, the key aim of which being to ensure that every pupil has skills other than their GCSEs and is able to take part in meaningful enterprise challenges. Gerard is very clear that although the word 'enterprise' is used, he does not feel that the aim of these activities is to encourage a future generation of people starting their own businesses but rather to furnish the young people with the skills that will make them employable.
- **Linking to other teachers:** The third key area of Gerard's role is to work with other teachers to embed enterprise learning into their teaching plans. As a part of this, Gerard works with a team of other subject teachers (not necessarily Business Studies teachers) who have opted to assist with the delivery of Enterprise Challenges.

The role reports to Joan Law, the Head Teacher of Laisterdyke. Gerard is keen to point out that he has a very free rein to create the opportunities that he does. It requires someone on the senior team, preferably the Head Teacher, to recognise the importance of enterprise and employability education in order to make the financial commitment necessary to employ a role such as Gerard's and ensure that it works.

Although Gerard has been set the above objectives, he does not have targets set for him and he has set himself targets for the number of activities completed to provide a focus for him, which are then agreed with the Head. He said the outputs for the role are not easily quantifiable and it could be argued that his role does not have a direct impact on the usual measures such as GCSE results, although it is fairly certain that the skills the students develop contribute to their exam success.

Apart from meeting the statutory requirements for work-related learning there are no specific measures for assessing skills achieved through this type of activity and this is something which Gerard is keen to see developed on a national basis as this would give a role such as his some firmer outputs to achieve.

## **PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR - BRANSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Branston Community College (BCC) is Lincolnshire's first Business and Enterprise college with a mixed 11-18 comprehensive school of around 1050 students which includes a successful Sixth Form. The College was one of the first eighteen schools selected for designation as a Specialist Business & Enterprise College from September 2002.

In 2005 the College set up a special partnership with Lincolnshire Cooperative (LC) and has embarked upon an exciting range of projects and initiatives with one of the county's major employers. Traditionally, partnerships between schools and business had been founded on personal relationships but sometimes proved unsustainable when people moved on. This partnership considered a new approach.

In order to manage this partnership, a budget has been set to which both BCC and LC contribute. The partnership is managed via a steering group made up of senior representatives from both BCC and LC as well as the local EBP who offer an external focus but are also seeking best practice in this field.

A Partnership Coordinator is employed for three days a week to develop the partnership with a dual reporting role to both the Principal and LC. The key attributes for the position are excellent communication skills and the ability to bring people together. Business knowledge and understanding of the education agenda (eg. the new Diplomas) are also vital.

Working closely with the school's Leadership Team, a primary task of the role is to look at all areas of the curriculum and look for opportunities where LC could add value. Examples of where this has been successful include the following:

- Religious Education: supported by LC's Funeral Services
- Science: support on the effects of drugs and alcohol
- Hospitality: support on alcohol awareness
- IT: support on web design
- Maths: using shop layouts to increase knowledge and understanding of shape/dimensions.

An induction into the importance of the partnership was given to all teachers to increase understanding and gain buy-in. New teachers are inducted each year.

The job role has qualitative targets including widening engagement between BCC and LC, delivering high class work experience placements and, identifying/supporting business initiatives such as Lincolnshire Day and Fair Trade Fortnight.

The benefits of this partnership approach include the continued development of Young Enterprise, providing students with a powerful 'learning by doing' experience. The partnership works with feeder primary schools on special projects which benefits both BCC (potential students) and LC (brand). It has also helped to develop the skills of both teachers and staff from LC (eg. career talks and speed dating).

BCC also has 'fair trade' status which fits well with LC's values and strengthens the partnership.

### **ANNETTE FRANCE, HEADTEACHER CHIPPING CAMPDEN SCHOOL**

Annette France is Head Teacher at Chipping Campden School and was previously was head at Heart of England School in Solihull. She is passionate about the role of education in preparing young people for life and work.

Both schools benefited from the positive approach to employer links. Chipping Campden, in rural Gloucestershire, now has a stunning portfolio of support from the major business in the area as well as significant involvement in the skills and employability development of students in traditional local work such as dry stone walling and thatching.

*“By being ‘out there’ having strong links with business, we get things offered, and that enriches the learning of our students” Annette said. “It was also the case at Heart of England and in both schools the impact of involvement from employers is really positive” Annette believes that a strong role for the head was enormously helpful in creating links. “The first contact being from the Head Teacher is a powerful one. It says that it is of significance to the school” she said. “However that doesn’t preclude someone else maintaining and growing the relationships. At Heart of England our Director of Specialism, which was Business & Enterprise, led. And it doesn’t have to be a member of the teaching staff. We had a member of the admin team who managed links with the Chamber of Commerce”*

Annette believes that professionalism is the key: *“It is about the right ‘face’ of the school. Someone who can demonstrate that the school wants to learn from employers wants their contribution. And who, equally, can educate them about what schools are about. It is a very important role for a school, one that should be visible and active.”*

### **SUE LONG, BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE DIRECTOR ACROSS A PARTNERSHIP OF TWO SCHOOLS: THE GRANTHAM CHURCH (VA) HIGH SCHOOL AND THE KING’S SCHOOL, GRANTHAM**

This Grantham partnership includes a boy’s grammar school and a mixed, secondary modern. The two schools were set up as a joint B&E College in September 2003. Originally, a Deputy Head at each school managed the specialism within their school, with a Governor working part time as community co-ordinator. By January 04 it was obvious that this system was not working and the post of BEC Director was advertised. As the Deputy Heads had found it difficult to balance the needs of the specialism with teaching commitments, management and other whole school responsibilities, it was decided that it should be a non-teaching role on the Senior Leadership Team of both schools. The appointment of Sue Long commenced on 1 April 2004.

The job specification required the following from the new appointee:

1. To be responsible for the running of the BEC
2. To further develop the bid and ensure planned initiatives happen
3. To ensure future planning be in place
4. To be a member of the leadership team of both schools
5. To be responsible for producing termly reports and updates for both governing bodies
6. To be Young Enterprise co-ordinator
7. To steer/monitor collaborative work with relevant Heads of departments

8. Develop and extend links with the Community in Education and Business and oversee the Community Plan
9. To seek out initiatives in the Specialist School area
10. To establish relevant education enterprise activities in both schools in the partnership
11. To raise funds.

The person specification required candidates to demonstrate:

1. An understanding of current education issues
2. An understanding of the links between business and enterprise education and the opportunities that these afford
3. Previous leadership/management experience (desirable)
4. Self-motivation, a proactive approach, ability to identify opportunities and follow through to a conclusion
5. Strong communication and IT skills and ability to communicate effectively across a spectrum of people
6. Good organisation, ability to plan effectively and to ensure targets and deadlines are met
7. Good marketing skills
8. Experience of working with young people (an advantage).

Of the six short-listed candidates, three came from business, one was a Business Link / Investor in People Adviser and two came from FE (lecturer and Business Development Manager).

Since the new appointment, there have been number of developments:

- The schools continue to work in partnership with respect to delivery of the community plan and by sharing the BEC Director.
- BEC Director represents both schools on: Young Enterprise Area Board, Enterprise Learning Partnership (used to be a spoke of S'EEN), BAF Diploma Network, EBP BEC strategic group, Extended Schools Cluster, SSAT network meetings, community meetings.
- Both schools have established a strong primary stakeholder group with robust links with EBP and PFEG (personal finance education group)
- Both schools took part in Ofsted survey and featured in its report "Developing Financially Capable Young People" (March 2008). The management of personal finance across each of the schools was recognised as good practice. BEC Director & DH were invited to give workshop at Ofsted conference in Jan 08.
- BEC Director works with SSAT as an "Adding up to a Lifetime" champion.
- Additional funding has been secured (such as via Pathfinder, Diploma, Enterprise grants)
- Comprehensive programme including enterprise days, initiatives, competitions, guest speakers / business ambassadors established at both schools, to augment enterprise teaching within curriculum time.
- Both schools are lead schools on BAF Diploma. King's is delivering BAF Advanced Diploma on behalf of local consortium. They have engaged in Career Academies UK and are running a company pilot with Young Enterprise
- BEC Director is able to drive new initiatives e.g. use of Enterprise Tracker, u-xplore
- The new Director has strengthened employer engagement in both schools.

Initially, developing an understanding of the two school cultures and building credibility with the teaching staff took considerable time and effort. There were a number of logistical issues to resolve arising from working across two schools, in two offices, two computer and procedural systems. Balancing and prioritising work, often with conflicting deadlines across both schools, also required considerable juggling skills.

However, in spite of these teething issues, by working together, the schools have benefited from a range of economies of scale including a joint representation in the community and on local, regional and national networks. The new appointment has led to the raising of the profile of both schools in various partnerships and networks, and resources and best practice are more effectively shared.

Sue Long believes that *'As a non-teacher, I am not constrained by school timetable, making me more flexible and accessible to the outside world. Being on the senior leadership team of both schools has been – and remains - crucial to making change happen'*.

#### **KEVIN BOYLE, HEADTEACHER, OAKLANDS SCHOOL, CHESHIRE**

Being Head Teacher of a secondary special school that serves all Cheshire, Kevin Boyle is wholly committed to ensuring his students are prepared for work and employability, and have developed to become as independent as possible. Oaklands School students all have significant barriers to learning yet their achievements are significant. In the last three years none of those leaving the school have become NEETs and Kevin has carried out a longitudinal study on those who left in 2004. Of the 23, there are 17 in full-time employment, three actively seeking it, and three still pursuing education.

*"Links with the world of employment are incredibly important"* said Kevin. *"At Key Stage 4 work related learning and enterprise have been our core business for several years"* Each Oaklands Year 11 student gets a two week block placement, and there are numerous individual placements as well.

Kevin continued: *"Holistic development is vital. Good and outstanding schools don't stop at core curriculum subjects, they prepare people for the world after school"*. Kevin was a beneficiary of an HTI placement into the Health and Safety Executive, and also arranged for Oaklands to host a reverse secondment, from Lloyds TSB. *"Both experiences were incredibly valuable and have benefitted the school, students, teachers, and employers too"*. He has now ensured that there is an ongoing, continuous commitment to maintaining and further building on the school's strong emphasis in this area.

*"Our head of Key Stage 4, an Assistant Head, is designated as having the lead for links with the world of employability. It's built into his job description as a key strategic responsibility, and senior leadership team regards it as wholly appropriate that it's there."*

Oaklands's success, and the progress of its students, is bound up with its emphasis on developing the skills of employability and enterprise. *"All our students have statements of special needs. With the significance we place on business links, the special responsibility we attach to them, we can make sure that every student has a chance to succeed"*, Kevin said.

**LESTER DAVIES, HEAD TEACHER, CHADSMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL, STAFFORDSHIRE**

For more than ten years its Head Teacher, Lester Davies, has led the school in an extensive range of partnership activities with employers. *“It is an integral part of our policy and life that we involve the local community in the school, and businesses are a key part of that”* he said.

All children, from Reception to Year 6, benefit from the links. *“The links help children aspire, to see what may be possible for them”* said Lester. *“In many of our families the level of aspiration has been low”*.

The opportunities – from the younger children visiting the supermarket manager and learning about running a shop, to older pupils developing entrepreneurial skills – provide benefits across the curriculum. *“Design, maths, literacy, communication skills, are all developed from the genuinely exciting experiences they have”* according to Lester. *“They are able to tap in to the huge rich vein of local expertise that business has”*.

It’s not only the children that learn. Lester and his Deputy have both benefitted from HTI secondments into business, and Chadsmead has had a Take 5 secondee from business working with staff inside the school.

*“It’s essential that links and relationships are driven and responsibility taken by someone senior”* said Lester. *“We’re now at a point when all staff are involved but it’s essential that there’s a strong lead taken when the process is in its early stages. And it has to be owned by the senior management team”*.

Lester concluded: *“The benefits have been extensive. Resources, expertise, and learning that we wouldn’t otherwise have enjoyed have resulted from our links. It’s vital to have a clear picture of how you want the school to benefit, and explain clearly the help that a business can provide. Help employers to help you by having clarity of purpose and contact”*.