

Small Schools Project 2020

Project summary

Small schools are defined by the DfE as schools with less than 110 pupils on roll. In Lincolnshire, these schools play a vital and valuable role in the rural villages and communities that they serve. Due to their size, small schools often have mixed age classes requiring leaders and staff to hold and deploy multiple roles and/or specialisms across the school.

The small schools project aims to provide tailored training opportunities for leaders and staff in the county's small schools. It will support leaders and staff to engage in Professional Learning Communities by offering training and support from system leaders and experts. Alongside the provision of training and development opportunities, areas of good practice will be identified and shared within the project. Various Lincolnshire partners will collaborate with the project to ensure a joined up approach and to avoid duplication e.g. English Hub, Maths Hub, LEAP and LAMP.

Aims and Objectives

- Leaders in small schools have the skill, knowledge and leadership to develop a curriculum, which is ambitious for all pupils including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND.
- Using a research based approach; the curriculum is coherently planned for mixed age classes and sequenced towards developing pupil knowledge and skills. As a result of Covid-19, there will also be a focus upon assessment, curriculum design and intervention.
- Teachers are upskilled to deliver across mixed age classes.
- Small schools feel well connected to the wider system and each other.

Strategies

The strategies included in the project, will target classroom teaching and learning as well as strategic subject leadership. The aim of the project is to increase the knowledge, pedagogy and confidence of teachers to plan and teach across mixed age classes in both English and Maths throughout the school in order to facilitate positive progress, particularly in light of the disruption caused by Covid-19.

Following on from the English and Maths training delivered in Autumn 2019, our trained Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) will lead a series of termly cluster meetings in order to ensure embedded learning and sustained school improvement.

Schools will be clustered geographically. The original aim of the project was that meetings would be held locally to improve the capacity to engage and connect with others. However, due to Covid-19, the meetings will be held virtually via Zoom or Teams. We will though, still group schools geographically to support future collaboration. Cluster meetings will be held termly (each long term) and schools can choose to engage in an English or a Maths cluster or both. Under normal circumstances, cluster meetings would be held during an afternoon and would run from 1pm – 4pm, on a mutually convenient date and hosted by one of the group member's schools. However due to Covid-19, virtual meetings will be held at the end of the school day, to cause minimum disruption, from 3pm – 5pm.



Cost

Phase 1 (2020/21)

The first three cluster meetings will be funded through the Local Authority and therefore free of charge.

Unlike the CPD events held in the Autumn term, there will be no funding available to schools to cover the cost of supply. Cluster meetings (once face to face training is resumed) will be held locally to support capacity and engagement.

Phase 2 (2021/22)

At this point we are unsure whether further funding will be available to support the project and therefore cluster meeting four and beyond will need to be traded and at a cost to **all** schools.

Based on 36 schools engaging in phase 2 of the project, the cost would be £450 for attendance at all six clusters, 3 for English and 3 for Maths.

Based on 30 schools engaging in phase 2 of the project, the cost would be £540 for attendance at all six clusters, 3 for English and 3 for Maths.

Based on 24 schools engaging in phase 2 of the project, the cost would be £675 for attendance at all six clusters, 3 for English and 3 for Maths.

If schools choose to engage in one subject only, then half the fees would apply.

These prices are estimates and will be subject to change depending upon the number of schools that engage in the project.

Roles and Responsibilities

Cluster Leads

Each cluster will be led by a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) who specialises in either English or Maths. All have experience of working in a small school. Our SLEs have accessed training from the North Yorkshire Consultancy Team who delivered the Autumn term CPD and have been recently updated by the English and Maths Hub in the most current research.

School Based Lead

Each school will be required to nominate a 'School Based Lead' who will drive English and/or Maths across the school or federation. Their role will be to disseminate expertise and leadership directly back to school staff. The School Based Lead, in agreement with their Head Teacher, will need to develop an action plan using the EEF guidance on effective implementation plans. This will become the main driver for school improvement in their school setting.

The gap between each cluster meeting will allow time to drive the actions and key priorities identified on the implementation plan, ensuring that any new learning remains a focus for the school.



Timescales

Term	Activity	Cost
Summer term 2020	Communication to schools	N/A
Autumn term 2020	Cluster meeting 1	Free
Spring term 2021	Cluster meeting 2	Free
Summer term 2021	Cluster meeting 3	Free
Autumn term 2021	Cluster meeting 4	Phase 2 traded
Spring term 2022	Cluster meeting 5	Phase 2 traded
Summer term 2022	Cluster meeting 6	Phase 2 traded

Further development/Next steps

Cluster Meetings

If there is enough interest from schools, cluster meetings will remain sustainable at a traded cost, or free to maintained schools should further funds become available from the Local Authority.

Continued Professional Development

Continuous feedback will be gathered from small schools and should there be an interest in further training opportunities, we will respond accordingly by providing a series of further CPD events according to need. Suggestions already made are: Reading and Curriculum. Like cluster meetings, any CPD will most likely run at a traded cost.

Expressing Interest

If you are interested in becoming involved in this stage of the Small Schools Project 2020, then please contact Denise Parker at:

Email: denise.parker@keystoneteaching.org.uk

The deadline for expressing an interest is Friday 11th September 2020.