

# INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT

DATE: 18 January 2013

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Areas of Strength

□ The school's overall vision, objectives, and targets are clearly defined and well communicated, with people at all levels having a good understanding of how they are expected to contribute to these objectives. Moving from outstanding to exceptional was regularly mentioned in terms of the school's vision going forward and teaching staff were all very clear about how they are expected to contribute to narrowing the gap in terms of FSM pupils.

□ People are also involved in the planning process and strategy development through a number of different mechanisms that were regularly referenced. Good practice would suggest that if people are clear about what is expected of them and why and they are effectively engaged in the planning process, they are more likely to deliver what the school requires and will also be more motivated to do so.

□ There also continues to be a strong culture of effective employee engagement in place, where people are empowered to take ownership within their roles and take responsibility for key tasks and make decisions (at a level appropriate to their roles) that do impact on performance. Effective delegation, people being encouraged to make the most of their talents and numerous opportunities for people to develop leadership capabilities, are all ways through which this occurs. As a result the majority of people interviewed regularly described how they gained a lot of job satisfaction from having this level of input. The school's successes and ongoing improvements are undoubtedly as a result of this type of culture being in place, as a high level of employee engagement is widely acknowledged as being a key factor of high performance work places.

□ Senior leaders clearly understand the impact that effective and consistent leadership and line management can also have on people's motivation, commitment and performance ultimately. In this respect there is a shared understanding among managers of what constitutes effective leadership and management of the staff team, in terms of the key skills and behaviours that all line managers need to get the best out of individuals and teams. Managers' performance is also regularly reviewed in this respect and there are numerous ways in which managers are supported to further enhance or develop these leadership and management capabilities.

□ Positive working relationships exist between the majority of people and their managers, as well as members of the senior team. As a result there were many positive comments heard from people in line with how they are led, managed and developed to deliver high levels of performance. A number of the senior team as well and a number of middle managers are considered by other employees to be inspiring in terms of their approach to leading, managing and developing the workforce and are very much viewed as positive role models. The rate of career progression of some of the senior team together with their energy and passion for their work, were reasons why many felt these individuals were inspiring. People also frequently confirmed that they both trusted and respected their direct line

managers and words such as “approachable, knowledgeable, supportive and a good listener,” were all regularly referenced here.

□ A coaching culture is clearly evident and this is something that has been strengthened since the time of the school’s last Investors in People Review and is being used to assist individuals to develop and improve their overall performance, where appropriate. As well as trained coaches now being in place, line managers were generally confirmed as using coaching skills with members of their team again when appropriate, as a means of developing individual potential.

□ People regularly confirmed that they believe their contributions are valued and recognised. The school has a recognition and reward strategy which has a number of strands to it. This is also an area that has been further strengthened since the school’s last Investors in People Review with the development of a Rewards and Incentives Group who present awards each term for people that have been nominated by colleagues and who are believed to have “gone above and beyond” their normal day job. Gestures of appreciation for individuals and teams, positive praise and feedback from line managers and senior leaders, career progression opportunities being taken up, teachers having the opportunity to be observed by peers and the flexibility and support offered to staff, were all regularly mentioned as reasons why people feel valued and recognised. The school’s approach here is undoubtedly another key factor why people are committed to their work, are loyal to the school and it is something which makes the school an employer of choice for many. A number of people also compared their experiences of working for school very positively to those of their experiences when working for previous employers.

□ There is undoubtedly a culture of continuous learning in place evident from the many examples of development described by people which they have been encouraged to access in a variety of ways. The senior team and other managers also act as effective role models in this respect and people understand that they equally have a responsibility to identify their own development needs as appropriate and are motivated to do so. People regularly described examples of development which have impacted positively on their ability to improve their performance or their team’s and equally understand how this ensures the school continues to be successful and delivers positive outcomes for the students. The school is now a Teaching School which means it has a responsibility to share good practice with other schools, with the aim of improving performance and as a result this has afforded a number of teaching staff further development opportunities e.g. Senior Leader in Education and Outstanding Facilitator training.

### **Areas for Development**

1. Opportunities for some non teaching staff to have their learning and development needs regularly reviewed, receive timely feedback about their performance and to agree performance objectives could be stronger. This is an area that historically the school has tried to address and improve. However there is still work to be done here. Plans to bring the performance management system in line with that for teaching staff could be a good start. Equally there is a need to ensure that all line managers tasked with this responsibility are clearly accountable, the process is rigorously monitored and where appropriate training and support is offered to ensure that managers’ performance management skills are effective. **(Indicators 2 & 3)**

2. Building on the previous point, there is an opportunity to also strengthen how the school identifies and makes the most of non teaching staffs' talent and potential. Some people indicated they would like to have the opportunity to contribute more going forward but were not necessarily sure how they might practically do this or what opportunities might be available. Doing an audit of people's skills, qualifications and previous experience may also be worth considering here. **(Indicator 3)**

3. Follow through plans to revisit the school's induction process for new teaching staff who are not NQTs and for non teaching staff also. While overall new people confirmed they had been supported on joining the school, some indicated that this could have been more structured. Seeking the views of recent new starters as to what they would ideally like to see in an induction could also equally be considered. **(Indicator 8)**

4. The school could be more proactive in the way in which it seeks feedback from staff as to how they feel about the way they are being led, managed and developed. Issuing a regular staff survey is one option, as this would provide a useful periodic "temperature check" for the senior team as to how people feel about this area and over time could identify opportunities to improve. Using the same questions in subsequent surveys would enable the senior team to better assess/measure the direction of travel and the impact of any improvements they have implemented based on staff feedback, as well as to get a sense of whether over time people's views improve. As an alternative to an internal survey, the school could consider looking at taking part in the Best Companies Survey, which also allows the school to get a sense of how it is performing in relation to other organisations and fits with its vision of moving from outstanding to exceptional and being an employer of choice. Questions are based around a number of themes, all of which measure how effectively engaged people are in the workplace. Setting a target of what the senior team would like to achieve in terms of people's satisfaction levels in working for school (as measured in a staff survey) would help to also ensure that the school continuously improves in this area. In essence it becomes a Key Performance Indicator which the school can tangibly measure in terms of Staff Wellbeing and which also has an impact on overall school performance, given that if people are happy in their work they are more likely to be more productive. **(Indicator 10)**

5. Building on the previous point, there is also scope for managers (both teaching and non teaching) to more proactively seek feedback on an individual basis from their staff as to how they feel about how they are being managed and developed. Plans to roll out 360 feedback would be one way of addressing this. It would give managers another dimension to the feedback they receive around their leadership and line management skills and as well as highlighting management strengths this could also identify opportunities where managers could further improve their practice. Seeking feedback through a 360 process or in any other way should enable the school to continue to ensure that all staff are being led and managed effectively, consistently and in line with expectations. Engaging managers in a review/discussion of what are those key capabilities that make for an effective leader and manager of the staff team in school could also be part of this process, as this should help to ensure all managers understand the context and get their buy in. It is widely acknowledged that the way in which people are led and managed can have a significant impact on how productive people are in the workplace and therefore how successful an organisation is likely to be in achieving its objectives. **(Indicators 4 & 5)**

6. To build on current good practice, the school could now consider benchmarking its current approach to employee health and wellbeing to that of the good practice recommended in the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award and develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Recent research has demonstrated a clear link between positive employee emotional and physical health and wellbeing and people's productivity in work,

something which the senior team clearly appreciate. Working with the framework and also possibly taking the opportunity to visit other organisations to look at others' approaches is something that could be considered. The school could also consider being assessed against the Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award longer term. **(Indicator 3)**

7. As part of the school strategy linked to social responsibility (and within this its commitment to being environmentally sustainable), the senior team could look to working towards achieving the ECO Schools Award going forward and use this framework to strengthen its approach here. Most staff did not feel the school operated in an environmentally friendly way. Despite the school building which in itself presents challenges here, many were not aware of the school's recycling policy. The move to a new building will no doubt also help to move this agenda forward. **(Indicator 1)**

8. With respect to the recruitment and selection of new people to school, the majority of staff (non managers) could not confirm that their views were sought when recruiting and selecting team members. By seeking appropriate ways of involving team members in the selection of new people, this could help to improve the overall decision making process (in terms of additional viewpoints being offered/being mindful of team dynamics etc). It would also provide further development opportunities for those involved in the process and it is another way of effectively engaging people. **(Indicator 3)**

9. Finally, take the opportunity to attend the annual liP Champions Network meeting and other events which are organised as appropriate. This should provide the senior team with more opportunities to externally benchmark their people management practices to those of other organisations, with a view to identifying any additional good practice which they may be able to take on board in the future. **(Indicator 10)**