

VALUE EDUCATION, VALUE EDUCATORS

Appraisal and Accountability at Cubitt Town Junior School

At our General Meeting on 28th February, Hannah Seifert, joint NEU Rep at Cubitt Town Junior School (CTJ) gave a presentation on the school's approach to appraisal and accountability.

The model at CTJ is very much in line with what the NEU would consider "good practice".

As part of our Value Education, Value Educators orientation, we want to use this as the basis for discussion with Reps and members in schools.

The NEU is arranging for Mary Bousted, joint GS to visit the school in the summer term to try and promote this to a wider audience.

Have a look and see what you think.

APPRAISAL

The system of Appraisal at CTJ has been developed over a number of years and stems from a sense that:

- Targets linked to data made no sense
- There was little reflection on Appraisal targets
- Teachers need to be trusted to reflect and develop as practitioners, building on their strengths
- Teachers are individuals not robots

The school wanted to celebrate the diversity amongst their teaching staff and give them more say and control over the process.

PROJECT BASED APPROACH

- Each member of teacher chooses an area for development that may be linked to the School Development Plan
- Teachers carry out a research project
- There are no targets, so no failure – means teachers encouraged to learn from mistakes
- Projects are presented to staff

LESSON OBSERVATIONS

CTJ has a system called "butterflying" a system where teachers learn from each other – this includes:

- Three teachers planning together and then watching each other teach
- Teachers also go and observe each other - you can suggest things you are good at that others may want to see or you may ask something you want to see and others may offer - SLT also make recommendations.
- 10 minute drop-ins on the teacher's terms - they decide:
 - when they are observed
 - who observes them – not always SLT

- the focus of the observation – something to show off or something challenging
- teachers invite SLT to observe

Underpinning all these is a focus on trust, conversation and personal development.

STAFF WELL-BEING • HAPPY WELL RESTED TEACHERS

The system at CTJ is situated within a whole school policy on staff well-being.

This includes:

- Free keep fit
- A staff “buddy system”
- Headteacher open door policy
- Regular praise and thanks
- Whole school training and meditation sessions
- Motivational speakers,
- Coaching sessions you can sign up to,
- A budget to spend as a year group for treats and wellbeing.
- NEU workload checklist almost all in place and discussions on marking and planning to keep it manageable.
- But also the attitude of SLT - at 5pm you get told to go home

Here is what the school includes in it job adverts.

"We passionately believe that happy, well-rested teachers make for good teachers. We therefore take the well-being of our staff very seriously and ensure that all of our teachers maintain a healthy work-life balance.

The successful candidates will be prepared to work hard and respond to the daily challenges of class teaching, but not have any unreasonable demands placed upon them in terms of hours worked, marking or evidencing.

We pride ourselves in providing an environment where teachers have the freedom to teach and to grow – you are the experts after all!"

Note: the school receives a high level of applications for teaching posts.

QUESTIONS FOR REPS

1. Do you have anything like this level of trust in staff at your school?
2. Do you think NEU members in your school would welcome a model along these lines?
3. How confident are you that your head would discuss something like this with you?
4. Do you think Tower Hamlets NEU should adopt this as a model to promote to schools?
5. Can you think of any other approaches to well-being that would support staff?
6. Are there any good practices in your school that may be of interest to others?
7. Would you be willing to talk about this at a future meeting?