

Mr.B Edwards
Director of Education
County Hall
MORPETH
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

6th May, 2004

Dear Mr. Edwards,

in response to the invitation to “think outside the box” enunciated at your meeting with the Bedlingtonshire Partnership last Thursday, we enclose a proposal regarding the “Bedlingtonshire Learning Community 3-19.” The enclosed model, and its accompanying rationale are clearly incomplete, and represent the outcome of a single meeting of the Partnership. Whilst there is enthusiasm to grapple with the detail and negotiate some resolution to the “wicked issues”, we did not wish to explore those avenues if this starting point is unacceptable. With this in mind, perhaps we could receive a response from you at your earliest convenience, advising us that further consultation would be welcomed or not, as the case may be.

THE BEDLINGTONSHIRE MODEL :1. INFLUENCES

Our thinking was driven by key principles:

- a) the importance of breathing life into a hard federation
- b) the need to deliver personalised learning
- c) the desirability of formalising our corporate responsibility for standards and performance, curriculum delivery and budgets, among other things
- d) the opportunity to confront surplus places and poor accommodation

THE BEDLINGTONSHIRE MODEL: 2. PROPOSALS

The entire Learning Community would be federated, and whilst five governing bodies might retain authority within the five inter-locking units, a Partnership Board (made up of learning Directors and governors) would be responsible for overall strategy.

The concept of provision from 3-19 requires uncharted and unrestricted thinking which might be assisted by the acceptance of three distinct phases of learning . INDUCTION, FOUNDATION, QUALIFICATION .incorporating one formal point of transition.

The existence of a federation, releases the exciting potential of flexible transition determined by student suitability. If K5III SATs could be completed at the end of Y8, a sandwich year would exist before the 13/14-19 structure begins to determine the Qualification Phase. This sandwich year has the potential to invigorate and equip students, giving character and purpose to the benefits of federation for the learner.

It may also be recognised that similar benefits could be extracted between the Induction and Foundation phases of learning, providing the opportunity to conduct transition as

benefits the learner rather than the law. If there is to be genuine commitment to Personalised Learning then these desirable outcomes would be possible, making a difference in practice rather than remaining as a desirable philosophy.

Bedlingtonshire's provision at the Qualification Phase would clearly be determined by the multiple strands that will make up the Tomlirison recommendations, but would also provide networking opportunities with Northumberland College, training providers and local universities as well as other "high schools".

Across the shire, the Induction and Foundation phases of learning would take place in three hard federations .Bedlington East, Guide Post and Bedlington West. Each would have a "teaching" Learning director, although each federation site of learning would have its own head of school. The combined learning phases would encompass children from three to either thirteen or fourteen. In order to ensure viability some wicked issue confrontation would be necessary; this could include re-mapping catchment areas and the potential for school closure.

Across the joint Induction, Foundation phase, and the Qualification phase, the Learning Community has the benefit of Cleasewell Hill as a learning resource. This would offer huge outreach potential and provide a genuine opportunity to re-define the terms "remedial support", "focussed intervention", "learning mentorship" (as distinct from strategies that focus on behavior) as well as giving vitality to professional coaching at both teaching and teaching assistant levels.

As we are committed to standards and not structures we acknowledge that procedural management will be crucial to the success of this Learning Community. The Partnership Board would be responsible for a continuous agenda for improvement, both in terms of "state of the art" learning environments, but also the measurable learning outcomes, beginning with K51 SATs, ending with the proposed advanced diploma of the National Qualification Framework, and including vocational qualifications, student tracking systems and procedures for target setting and their evaluation.

We trust that the enthusiasm that energised our discussion is evident in this written report. We are eager to move forward, but need an endorsement from you before proceeding.

Yours faithfully,

F.R. Forster
HEADTEACHER

BEDLINGTONSHIRE LEARNING COMMUNITY

3 - 19yrs

CATCHMENT RE-MAPPING

QUALIFICATION
PHASE

FOUNDATION
PHASE

INDUCTION
PHASE

Director of Learning
BEDLINGTONSHIRE HIGH SCHOOL
13/14 - 19 yrs
outreach

Cleaswell Hill School - Learning Resource

PARTNERSHIP BOARD

BEDLINGTON
EAST
FEDERATION
Director of Learning
outreach
Heads of School

GUIDE POST
FEDERATION
Director of Learning
Heads of School

BEDLINGTON
WEST
FEDERATION
Director of Learning
outreach
Heads of School

COMMITMENT

TO

PERSONALISED

LEARNING

potential

potential

potential

outreach

outreach

outreach