

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™

We invest in people



Feedback

Stockport School

Project number: NOR-21-01474

Practitioner: Liam Linacre

Investors in People North of England

Lee House

90 Great Bridgewater Street

Manchester

M1 5JW

0844 4068008

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You did it!

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™

We invest in people Standard

You're at the Standard level of our We invest in people accreditation.

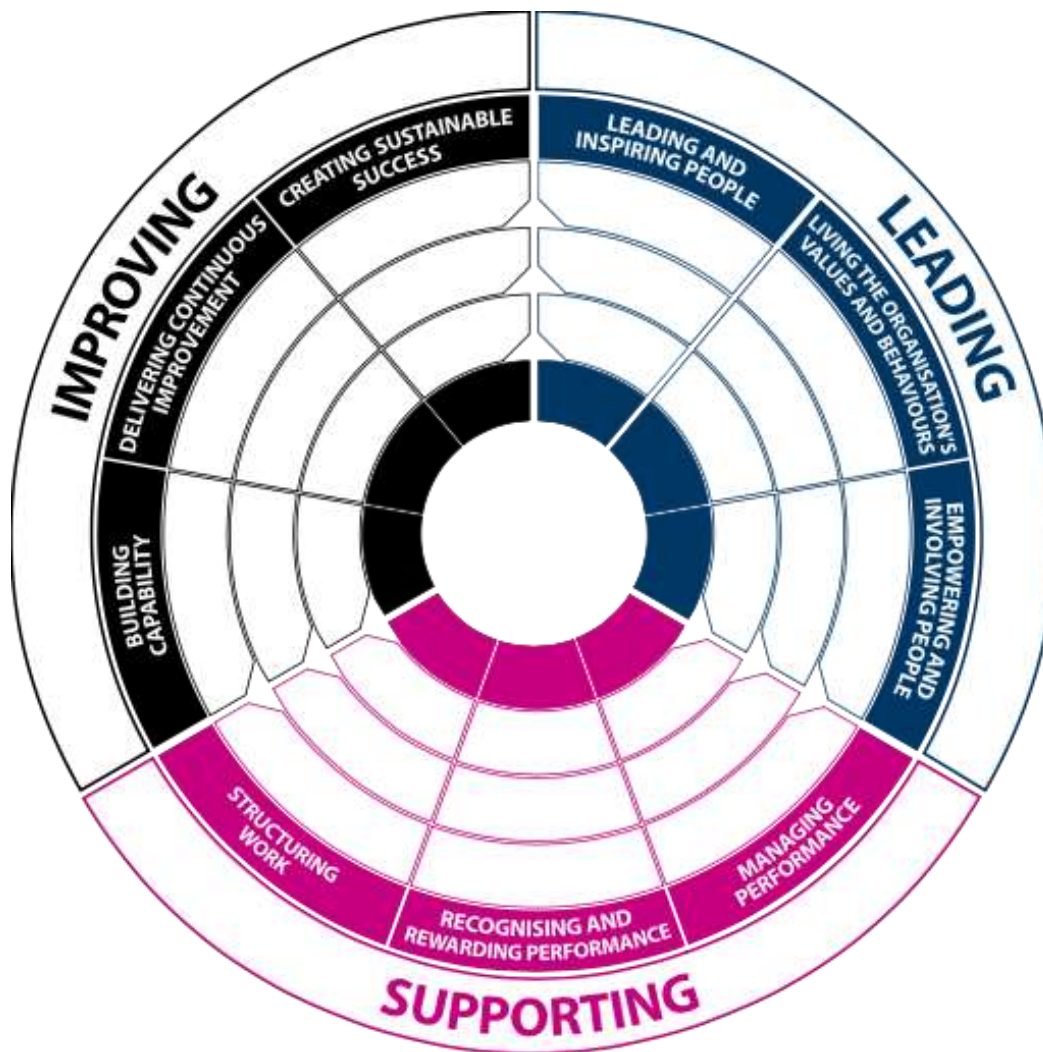
Detailed feedback and recommendations inside...

- What to be proud of
- What to work on
- Our recommendations
- What's next

Key dates

Accreditation date	12-month meeting	24-month meeting	Accreditation expiry
30/03/2022	27/11/2022	27/11/2023	27/11/2024

At a glance



You are an example of a School which has endeavoured to embrace proven principles in high performance management – with passion, energy, and commitment, even when external pressures are colossal!

Stockport School first opened in 1888. Over eighty years ago, in 1938, the school moved to its present site on Mile End Lane, providing the current school with a beautiful traditional building. Stockport School has since become very much part of the 21st century. It is a thriving and very successful LA mixed comprehensive school for over 1100 students.

In 2005, the school became a Specialist Arts College. This means that, in addition to offering the full National Curriculum entitlement to students, the school is recognised as being a provider of excellence in the Visual and Performing Arts. The Arts College Status also means that the school benefited from enhanced funding, which allowed us to create outstanding Art Studios and a Gallery area. All subjects benefit, as, through the Arts College they are able to teach more creatively and to offer students extra opportunities. The school has been awarded the ArtsMark Gold award four times.

Significant investment has allowed the school to develop enhanced teaching areas:

- Art Studios, refurbished Technology area and Library, a huge investment in ICT facilities, including digital projection in all classrooms, interactive whiteboards, and several new ICT suites.
- In 2010, a new building, dedicated to the Creative and Media and R.E.
- In 2012, additional new building works, comprising three new history classrooms and a Dance/ Drama Studio.
- Modern sports complex including Sports Hall and Fitness Suite
- An excellent Drama studio, with 4D projection facilities and Music Block with recording studio and Music Technology Suite.
- Greenhouses and gardening area, refurbished Dining Room.
- Security fencing, electric gates, and CCTV for the safety of the students.
- 2020/21 extensive building work creating additional classrooms

Stockport School is recognised by others as a centre of excellence:

- Leading Edge School from 2005 to 2012: innovating and sharing good practice.
- Two national nominations for excellence in the 'Innovation and Impact' Leading Edge Award
- Artsmark Gold (four times awarded)
- Basic Skills Quality Mark (five times awarded) -first in Stockport
- Inclusion Quality Mark -first in Stockport
- Investors in People
- Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)
- Centre of Excellence in Financial Education
- Young Carers Gold Award
- International Schools Award
- E-Twinning Award
- Inspiring IAG Award - Stage 2
- Duke of Edinburgh Awarding Centre

So how did you end up here?

The school was first accredited with Investors in People in October 2014 against version 5 of the standard and following the Introduction of version 6 of the framework, the school decided to be assessed against this version of the standard. Since the 1st Assessment in 2014, the school has endeavoured to embrace high performance working principles across key themes and strategies which has contributed to ongoing performance. The school employs 125 staff.

As a result of the impact of the current Pandemic, Stockport School decided to defer their accreditation in 2021 and take advantage of the Strategic Assessment process. This allows the School 12 months to fully prepared for this accreditation.

This journey brought us to March 2022 where you were starting your assessment following some difficult times during 2020 and 2021 – the time of the Covid Pandemic!

So, were you proactive during the Pandemic...?

Stockport School and the staff responded in several ways to the coronavirus crisis. You locked down following the legislative changes which came into place in March 2020 but continued to deliver online and in classrooms throughout the pandemic in line with government direction.

Your people recognised that historically, the leadership team of the school have provided effective

support for its staff, students, and stakeholders – underpinned by the solid ethos of the school. Your people recognised what was needed to be done and what should be done do and set about this in a professional manner – even though there was significant apprehension. Your people recognised there were good and bad days, and overall and worked effectively as a team - within a supportive culture grounded in guidance.

Your people believed they had delivered the best they could - from effective communication, learning new IT skills, putting learning in place for students, the use of PPE and ensuring everyone was safe, adhering to social distancing etc. But it didn't stop there, your people talked about the care and concern displayed across the whole school and the personal approach to ensuring people were safe at home as well as at work – after all it was a sea change in delivering education during that period.

They were vocal in describing the developments within the school, specifically the adoption of processes for communication, developing remote learning for students, systems to share, support for people within their home environment, emotional stability, and professional momentum. You and your people had to deal with issues including Teacher Assessed Grading and an increased need for pastoral support and its impact across the school – and did this professionally and effectively. There was also significant building work taking place during this time, which was managed well.

Moving forward, you have a clear vision for the future based around delivering exceptional education, adopting best practice, and dealing with lingering Covid pressures, through great leadership, effective systems, a reflective curriculum, and highly educated and effective people.

Your vision is supported by formal planning processes and a clear set of objectives for the future within a school development plan. As a leadership team, you clearly articulated a desire to build on the successes you have experienced within the school and are looking forward to addressing opportunities presented to you. You and your people clearly described the approaches designed to deliver success, all of which focused on doing the right things including excellent pastoral support, high quality teaching, strong governor commitment, effective personal development – all contributing to Stockport School being a School of Choice within the community.

Combine this drive with strong evaluation activity and an open leadership style, and you have the recipe for success. Importantly, your people feel the school remains a great place to work - providing many examples to confirm this belief which was underpinned by a feeling of trust, transparency, and empowerment.

Now hindsight is a wonderful thing – so here's just a couple of reflective comments to consider before we find out more...

“Covid was tough, it's been difficult, it's been challenging but the leadership team got it right, the balance was perfect, the support amazing!, the live lessons were great with MS Teams – delivered by people who were supported to know how to use the software to support the teaching – we were covid safe and looked after, not just 'distance safe' but 'emotionally safe' too!”

“The best thing about Stockport School is the community spirit we have, there is always support for staff, always friendships created, opportunities abound, internal promotions and they also support external promotions too!”

What to be proud of

- **Your people say...**

...Stockport School is a great school to work in. As a result, you have a loyal workforce who take pride in their work, who feel trusted, empowered, and involved in delivering success. People are Proud to be employees of the school.

...the school is based around an embedded ethos, demonstrating strong values and behaviours with positive role models at all levels.

...people across the school pull in the same direction under a clear vision.

...people across the school go above and beyond in delivering success and making things happen

- **Your people love and value...**

...the supportive nature of the management style across the school. Your staff were vocal in confirming the open door style of management and valued the support given both in work and out of work.

...the safe and secure feeling within the school.

- **Your leadership has delivered success...**

...and its proven, you have been successful at your last Ofsted Inspection and continue to monitor and deliver an educational offer reflective of your communities expectation and needs.

...and you have been recognised for excellence within your sector and have a strong reputation.

...and hold numerous quality awards as already outlined in the introduction.

- **Your working practices have improved...**

...through your commitment to best practice across the school through elements such as new teaching methods, health & safety, staff welfare, and staff development.

...and you have embraced new technology, with activities including the development of an IT systems and new teaching approaches.

...with more effective communication.

...and you continued to develop key metrics to monitor and control performance.

- **Your commitment to Social Responsibility is community based...**

...promoting your CSR activity within the school and the wider community.

- **You invest in your staff...**

...and are committed to developing people across the school. You ensure all staff have the correct training to deliver their roles and support this with activities such as formal career development, succession planning, Inset and Carousel training – with support after development.

What to work on

- Maintaining the psychological contract with your people.
- Plan some measurable targets and objectives in areas such as social responsibility and health & wellbeing.
- Enhance Grit & Resilience with a focus on wellbeing
- Review/realign the current values, with consideration to the embedded ethos.
- Continue to focus on upskilling the workforce with consideration to succession planning long term.
- Ensure all staff maintain an active voice – develop a pulse survey linked to key intangibles such as trust, empowerment, wellbeing etc.
- Continue to look towards technology to provide efficiency and development opportunities where possible.
- Think about how you can return to historic good practices around reward, recognition, and celebration in a covid safe world.
- Ensure consistency in application and review effectiveness of the new performance management systems.
- Continue to look beyond your current school environment for improvement opportunities.
- Start to monitor and report non-academic performance of the school in a dashboard style - combining all the human resource related outcomes together.

Congratulations on achieving We invest in people accreditation!

You **care** about your people, and we know you're ambitious to do even more for them.

Our feedback focuses on what you need to do to keep improving.

Our recommendations

We've considered **who you are** and **where you're at** as an organisation. Our recommendations are designed to get you **where you want to be**.

- It's important for you to maintain the psychological contract with your people. You have won the hearts and minds of people in the school and should ensure that anything you change is adopted with engagement from these people. Communicate your success to the workforce so you continue to maintain the psychological contract with staff. **Consider celebrating this achievement now.**
- **Continue to deliver the current strategies – they are clearly effective – but be mindful of ongoing challenges** – e.g. staff may need more team type activities.
- Remember the past 2 years have been incredibly difficult for all, so focus on grit and resilience may help especially as covid pressures do not seem to be retreating. You have not had the staffroom as a focal point for two years – so it may be an opportunity to repurpose that space as a staff hub/wellbeing resource. (the old room looked like an airport lounge – a new resource could be created for staff to utilise in new and exciting ways!)
- You may wish to plan some measurable targets and objectives in areas such as social responsibility and health & wellbeing. Contribution and measurement of the impact of this activity should be recorded. Its without question, that you do a lot of activity, but could this be better utilised and reported on?
- Across the school, there is an embedded ethos - which was excellent, and historically you have ensured there are defined values in place. However, over time, the emphasis on the 'what and why' relating to the values has diminished – your people know you have them, but struggled when challenged to define and explain them as golden threads within decision making and activity – often confusing culture, values, and ethos. Improving the adoption of a values based culture in all activity will ultimately enhance your performance.
- You should continue to focus on upskilling the workforce especially at management levels and in specialist areas where succession planning is important. Having succession plans in place to allow people to utilise new skills, having career discussion and opportunities will ultimately pay off long term, especially with potential changes within the sector.
- You should keep developing the learning and development offer, focusing on skill development through all your activities.

- You have worked hard to develop collaboration and empowerment as a key theme - you should not be complacent and ensure all staff maintain an active voice in the challenges the school will face in the future. As such it may be useful to develop a system for monitoring the pulse of the school through survey type activities. A regular pulse survey, linked to key intangibles such as trust, empowerment, wellbeing etc would provide a heartbeat style monitoring activity.
- You should continue to look towards technology to provide efficiency and development opportunities.
- You already reward and recognise people and historically had many approaches to ensure people felt valued. With the impact of Covid, many established activities were lost and your people understood why - now you should think about how you can return to those historic good practices in a covid safe world - tailoring reward and recognition to individual motivators, with staff taking a lead in the strategies.
- You've already worked on performance management activities, but attention should be given to ensuring consistency in application and a review of effectiveness of the new systems.
- You've already demonstrated the impact of continuous improvement, now you should think about how you can look beyond your current school environment for improvement opportunities.
- You described great systems for monitoring performance from an academic perspective – perhaps you could now start to monitor and report non-academic performance of the school in a dashboard style combining all the human resource related outcomes together within the intangible measurements.

What's next?

When you've had a chance to read this report, we'll explain your results in our **feedback meeting**.

WHO?

The meeting will include: Liam Linacre and a representative from Stockport School.

WHEN?

The feedback meeting will be scheduled to take place within 4 weeks of this report.

WHERE?

We'll meet at **your School** or via **MS Teams**.

WHAT?

Together, we'll...

- **discuss your result** and our recommendations in detail.
- brainstorm how to turn our recommendations into **tangible activities**.
- develop an **action plan**, which we'll be able to review one and two years on.

To keep your accreditation, you need to:

- keep meeting (or exceed!) the **requirements** of your award.
- meet us **12 and 24 months** down the line. We won't be assessing you again, but it'll give us the chance to **chat through your progress** against your action plan.
- be **reassessed** no more than three years later.

Don't forget to celebrate!

Let your people know who how you did. **Reward them** for their hard work and **include them** in the journey you're on.

Assessment results

Your results by indicator

Compared to your last assessment, you've improved across many areas of the school and you're definitely on the right track.

INDICATOR	THEME	DEVELOPED
LEADING AND INSPIRING PEOPLE	Creating transparency and trust	✓
	Motivating people to deliver the organisations objectives	✓
	Developing leadership capability	✓
LIVING THE ORGANISATION'S VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS	Operating in line with the values	✓
	Adopting the values	✓
	Living the values	✓
EMPOWERING AND INVOLVING PEOPLE	Empowering people	✓
	Participating and collaborating	✓
	Making decisions	✓
MANAGING PERFORMANCE	Setting objectives	✓
	Encouraging high performance	✓
	Measuring and assessing performance	✓
RECOGNISING AND REWARDING HIGH PERFORMANCE	Designing an approach to recognition and reward	✓
	Adopting a culture of recognition	✓
	Recognising and rewarding people	✓
STRUCTURING WORK	Designing roles	✓
	Creating autonomy in roles	✓
	Enabling collaborative working	✓
BUILDING CAPABILITY	Understanding peoples' potential	✓
	Supporting learning and development	✓
	Deploying the right people at the right time	✓
DELIVERING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Improving through internal and external sources	✓
	Creating a culture of continuous improvements	✓
	Encouraging innovation	✓
CREATING SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS	Focusing on the future	✓
	Embracing change	✓
	Understanding the external context	✓

What your people told us

Leading

“2020 and 2021 were challenging years – lots of disruption and cause for concern across the school – but we provided support and guidance for all staff, invested heavily in remote learning systems, support for people at home and in their wellbeing and maintained our professional momentum.”

“We have reframed our school development plan to reflect the changing environment in which we operate- the outside world has an impact on how we perform with reduced support services around the school environment – we have increased pastoral support and engaged more.”

“We value, sustain and invest in development across the school – we invest in leadership capability, in coaching, in knowledge”

LEADING AND INSPIRING PEOPLE

Your people believe you continually motivate them to achieve exceptional results & deliver quality outcomes.

I was really impressed with the way many of your people described the leadership team as role models across the school – leading by example, building confidence, inspiring performance, and providing direction...

It's clear that you have invested considerable effort, time, and resources in ensuring all stakeholders across the school have clarity around the “why” of the school and its ethos. Your people described educational and pastoral needs, student focus, the commitment to quality education, safety requirements and the need to be skilled & well trained. **But it wasn't just words** – it was also detailed within documentation such as the school development plan, the governors statement and school working documents.

The school development plan covered themed areas including areas such as Curriculum Development, Teaching & Learning, Leadership Development and Communications. The plan was communicated at all levels through established communication process including INSET, leadership & staff meetings, governor meetings and the performance management process.

It is clear that your communication activities supported the regular update of progress towards delivering success and include clear reporting of results. It is evident that communication has improved across the school since the last review in many ways, driven by the challenges of the pandemic.

Importantly, your people described high levels of trust and responsibility across roles. This included how they managed delivery of their work, the decisions they made and the recognition received linked to performance. In general, Individuals crave work that lets them leave a unique fingerprint, they crave greater control over their jobs, they want to be more productive and feel they make a difference – your people were vocal in confirming that they had the chance to leave their own fingerprints across the school – **which was amazing!**

You recognise that creating and maintaining "motivation and buy in" from the staff around planning and the objectives of the school remains a priority...

For most organisations, objective setting is a challenge and as such most do not even attempt to develop

aligned objectives or regularly revisit them – **but that's not you!**

As a leadership team, you created objectives, made sure they were clear and transparent, and revisited them regularly. Your objective-setting set ambitious and measurable goals and you measured results and monitored progress. Because your objectives were public, it was easy to see accountability. This created alignment because your people could see who was dependent on their work. People felt comfortable that they knew what to do, they saw what others were working on, and the measurement of their performance was clear. You ensured current performance information was considered during planning and objective setting and your people confirmed involvement in these planning activities relevant to their roles across the school. **What's great is they confirmed that the leadership team were effective at managing people and performance.**

One part of an 'amazing organisation' is the commitment to both 'leadership' and 'management' development...

As a leadership team, you were facilitating/creating strategies, but when it came to delivering across the school - your teams were making things happen! Your people thrived on their ability to contribute to a greater good, and the leadership team contributed and supported this by setting goals, supporting people, coaching for high performance, and providing feedback to continuously improve. Investment in developing fundamental management skills has had a tremendous impact on engagement, performance, and retention at the school.

It's worth noting that a coaching culture is the practice that's most highly correlated with high performance, employee engagement, and overall staff retention and your commitment to coaching is enviable. Your coaches understood people's strengths, leveraged these strengths, and coached them to build on these strengths – remember, nothing makes a person feel better about work than being able to be highly successful.

But there's more...

Effective leadership at Stockport School was underpinned by leadership development, which was contributing to high levels of employee engagement. You described the need to continue to develop leadership skills across the school as a key focus in supporting effective succession planning. You invested heavily in leadership development to ensure that leaders are given ample support and your focus on building leaders, connecting leaders to each other, and giving leaders the coaching they need which was critical to building a highly engaged workforce.

As such, your people managers described key skills relating to communication, planning, time management, performance management, learning and development, personal support, coaching, as well as knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need to lead, manage, and develop people effectively. They provided examples of how they were effective in leading, managing and developing staff including the delivery of support for staff through performance management, through identifying training needs, through INSET and carousel activities and effective delivery of the school plan.

Your people confirmed the leadership team were passionate in the delivery of their responsibilities. Interviewees described this team of people as being fair & consistent, experienced, and strong communicators. **In summary, the staff feel confident in the team's ability and feel motivated by them to achieve exceptional results.**

LIVING THE ORGANISATION'S VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

The adoption and delivery of values is integrated into the activity across the School.

You recognised the challenge that the pandemic has brought in achieving uniformity and consistency in terms of adopting the values...

You and your people described the implicit core values which were embedded into activities across the school. They provided examples which chimed with the 5 values:

“Our Stockport School community is dedicated to inspiring respectful collaboration in an aspirational learning culture!”

Your values should be a powerful asset – they should explain to all stakeholders what the school believes and should remind everyone about the preferred ways of operating and achieving greatness. Overall they do, critically, your people referred to the principles of the values as underpinning the ethos within the school, articulated the linkages between the ethos and behaviours – but struggled to recite the values per se without prompting.

As a result, it was clear that the Values and Ethos contributed to success – they laid the foundations for what people believed the school cared about most and how the associated behaviours impacted on daily life at the school. The values impacted daily decisions, and help determine actions and activities. Examples of how the values were adopted through activities including day to day teaching, adherence to safety, charitable giving and involvement in community activities, training & development, social activities, and general culture.

Your staff were also proud of the work they do and the results, which all supported an organisation with a 'values driven culture'. Indeed, people were able to provide examples of where difficult decisions had been made in line with the values such as the development of the new online teaching methods and whole school behaviour.

Your people were not afraid of challenging their peers or holding the School and its people to account...

Through the interviews, your people also provided examples around how people were comfortable in providing feedback and challenging behaviours at all levels through activities which included formal and informal 1-1's with the leadership team, and through INSET and Carousels.

EMPOWERING AND INVOLVING PEOPLE

You have a workforce which is empowered and involved, who are comfortable in decision making at a level appropriate to their roles.

You tried hard to put your people at the centre of decision making – and you succeeded! There was emphasis placed on the opinions, thoughts, suggestions, and recommendations from stakeholders in order to be successful...

You described how you ensured that staff, were not only aware of, but also able to contribute to the practical activities needed to ensure success in each area of the school.

Indeed, many individuals provided examples about how their views and comments had been encouraged, supported, and adopted on a day to day basis. During interviews, the use of formal and informal 1-1's, meetings, INSETS, and the carousel processes were provided as evidence to support a strong consultation ethos. It was clear that this approach to team working and collective decision making was providing successful results and it was evident that consultation was an embedded theme across the school

Your staff confirmed that the process of sharing 'quality' feedback in a timely manner created a clear sense of ownership, which was reinforced through direct communication such as feedback from managers and the sharing of development knowledge. They confirmed the adoption and delivery of underpinning knowledge and skills through training was designed to deliver empowerment through competency, skills, and knowledge.

People provided examples supporting consultation and decision making including the development of the curriculum. Specific examples related to the development of the school careers offer and the new curriculum.

Support was given to ensure people were able to participate in both internal and external collaboration strategies such as form tutor meetings, pastoral team meetings, external network meetings and the ECT programmes

You described how your direct involvement as a leadership team confirmed a firm foundation for decision making...

Your people valued the access and visibility of the leadership team and staff members described how they were empowered to make decisions every day in the delivery of their roles, with numerous examples provided around improvements made. More importantly, as already stated, your people confirmed that they are trusted to make decisions regarding their areas of responsibility, with examples relating to teaching, curriculum development and behaviour management. Ultimately, your people felt empowered to challenge the status quo and drive performance in relation to their role. **But what's really great is they felt trusted to deliver their roles and their decision making was respected.**

Supporting

“Coaching occurs here at all levels and we have a support network within the school. But more than that we have autonomy.”

“Covid was a challenge but we responded – online learning was very good, we created a whole new school structure which has benefitted us, we have shared resources, new online resources (Firefly), MS Teams, clear expectations and its safe! ”

“The school really trusts you – my NQT programme was excellent and the leadership encourage you to get TLR’s ”

“Performance management has really improved this year – its more specific and has more reviews built in – its more purposeful with better targets ”

MANAGING PERFORMANCE

Your people within Stockport School believe they understand that success is reliant on their own performance.

Going the extra mile and delivering student focused support and education was a component of every interaction...

You described how you had re designed the processes for managing performance to meet objectives at individual, team, and school levels. To set objectives, Individual performance reviews were delivered to all staff members regardless of role. These processes were designed to ensure linkages between school and individual objectives. Covid had placed stress on delivering these processes, although your people were very aware of these pressures.

Your people confirmed that line managers were effective in supporting positive and negative performance...

Your people described how individual support was an engrained activity which supports their day to day performance. These people confirmed the support is both formal and informal in nature but includes personal support and person development and that it originates from the leadership team and is cascaded through the whole school – but importantly, these people believed they also had ownership of their own performance levels.

Overall, your people described the focus for the school & their own individual objectives and the linkages to the ethos of the school. These people confirmed ownership of their role with examples linked to the development of teaching and learning or effective pastoral care.

As a School, you were clear about the need to address succession planning - especially at senior levels, about competence as well as general diversity. As a result, there were examples of people developing their careers through your training activity. You also confirmed effective recruitment, selection and induction activities and had adapted you approaches to take into account the restrictions needed to remain safe.

You also described how the School was comfortable with external review and had positive reviews from Ofsted, families, visitors, and partners.

RECOGNISING AND REWARDING HIGH PERFORMANCE

It was clear that recognition and reward was part of the culture at Stockport School.

Appreciation was a core attribute adopted by your people and your reward and recognition approaches were recognised by your people as a way of demonstrating performance – not just in delivering work but in also demonstrating impact

You described how Reward & Recognition was an embedded process with activities linked to staff events (Pre Covid), flexibility (wherever possible), above average terms and praise to name but a few. Your people felt appreciated through the processes employed and confirmed consistent application, regardless of role with examples such as praise featuring highly as a motivator. Your people were also keen to highlight how covid had reduced some of the social rewards – but how this wasn't affecting overall recognition levels.

As a result, your people confirmed that all the processes described are part of an established system for reward and recognition. Your people confirmed that they are recognised for performance and that the approaches are consistently deployed.

But it wasn't just about money or benefits – it was much more than that...

Your people described how reward and recognition linked to celebration and that it is an activity which has been embedded over many years with examples relating to people receiving gifts, taking part in nights out, flexible working arrangements (including medical) and praise direct from peers, and the leadership team. Add to this personal life event celebrations and a real focus on people and you have a winning formula.

It's true that most employees have complicated lives and your people are no different. Studies consistently show that people rather have more free time than make more money. Given the nature of work today, it's clear that your people also value the flexible and supportive work environment you have created. For example by creating free time with all staff operating at 84% contact, managers with 74% contact, part time staff have choice of days, best fit timetables to name but a few of your approaches.

In addition to your historic recognition and reward processes, employee wellness is now part of your offering and has a major impact on engagement – it's good that you have been proactive in trying to meet people's needs.

The need for continuous and ongoing recognition and verbal praise is an extraordinary tool for building engaged teams. You should continue to build a "high-recognition school" with a culture of recognition through social reward systems, daily, weekly, or monthly thank-you activities, and a general culture of appreciating everyone from top to bottom. The key to success here is to create a social environment where recognition can flow from peer to peer, freeing line managers from being the judge and jury of employee recognition. This kind of culture see tremendous impact – with additional physiological effects – for example when you thank someone, it releases oxytocin, a hormone that makes people more relaxed, collaborative, and happy.

STRUCTURING WORK

Your approaches to structuring the school to be successful were evident and would imply Stockport School is structured to deliver its vision

Your forward-thinking approach to matching opportunities to roles and structures has delivered success...

You described the work which has been undertaken across the school in relation to developing a fit for purpose structure. You have a future awareness of succession planning and effective management. There were clear reporting activities, clear roles and responsibilities for staff and policies and procedures – and more importantly, the work done recently in light of the pandemic to ensure a safe environment for staff.

During interviews, clear roles, accountabilities, and responsibilities were confirmed, with your people confirming roles were interesting and utilised their skills and capabilities. People confirmed items like job descriptions were in place from the start of employment. There was clarity through regular staff meetings, INSET and leadership team management meetings. The school had developed an extended senior leadership team to enhance people's contribution – it was great to hear!

It was recognised that you have endeavoured to make sure jobs are meaningful, that your people have the tools such as procedures/policies and autonomy in decision making to succeed, and that you have selected the right people for the right job. **Take merit in the fact that this is anything but a simple undertaking.**

It is clear how the structure of the school allowed people to share experiences and develop additional job related skills and competences, with your people confirming the availability of the management team. Specific examples were freely given about line management support and there were examples of career promotions.

Networking and collaboration have delivered many tangible opportunities to improve performance...

In relation to enabling collaborative working, it was clear that there were embedded approaches to ensuring the sharing of good practice. Your people confirmed that team working was effective and encouraged sharing best practice through technology like What's App or just from being available. Interviewees confirmed levels of accountability in relationship building for example through the ECT programme, through NPQ development, or with external partners.

Improving

“There is loads of development delivered here, the carousels are excellent on topics such as ADHD to staff wellbeing.”

“It’s really nice to be back and focused on teaching – The teach like a Champion has been excellent.”

“The whole school community is a strength – and the links we have with the outside community is excellent, we do loads of pastoral activity and it counts.”

BUILDING CAPABILITY

Your people across the school believe that the leadership team are committed to building the capacity of the workforce.

Learning and development is considered an important tool for delivering success...

When top performers leave any organisation – it’s usually for new career opportunities especially if they feel they are not going to progress in their chosen role or career - but your **employee retention is excellent and your people wanted to stay to deliver great things.**

It’s clear that learning opportunities, professional development, and career progression are among the top drivers of employee satisfaction. Building opportunities for growth is a complex and systemic challenge. You described how your approach to building capability within Stockport School was managed and constantly evolving. Developmental opportunities, both formal and informal let people learn on the job, experience developmental opportunities, and find support when they need help. There was a clear commitment to development in all its forms. There were records of learning and development, including examples of the materials used in the activities. You had designed learning, onboarding, and transition management programs, within a culture of support and learning, giving people time to learn.

You described a range of development support, advice and guidance activities which were occurring such as industry training, new teacher training, carousel, and higher education. The volume of external training was immense – with examples such as MSC’s, NPQLTD, NPQSL to name just a few. Internal training was sought where a requirement had been identified to enhance an employee’s learning, knowledge and capabilities thus enabling the school to continuously improve. The INSET and Carousel processes were embedded and valued by staff, with many key individuals leading on delivering learning.

More importantly, your people confirmed the commitment and approaches were strong. They described the flexible approaches to learning and development which were in place. **It was clear that your people believed learning was at the heart of the culture of the school.**

Then add to this the revised performance management processes, to identify the potential of people and as a vehicle to deliver feedback. Layer in the coaching activities and the supportive style of leadership and it’s then easy to recognise that capability building was super strong. Your approach wasn’t limited to existing staff but also new recruits - you described how the recruitment, selection and induction activities linked to the support at the start of an employee’s work within the school, and it was even better for ECTs. But it wasn’t just my observations, your people confirmed that performance management was a two-way process, supportive, focused and utilised to identify learning and development needs.

You described how resources were proactively managed across the school and that succession planning is

growing in importance- especially with potential changes in the industry. It was clear that you supported and honoured facilitated talent mobility – with people feeling that they are growing and can take on new opportunities. The leadership team, as a whole, supported and facilitated internal mobility, giving people the freedom to try something new and move from a role where they are highly productive to one where they may be a novice!

A final thought of diversity and inclusion...

Highly engaged workplaces are also inclusive and diverse, with individuals able to share and voice their thoughts and feelings – and I was pleased to recognise the people at Stockport School felt comfortable being themselves, sharing their views and opinions.

Diversity and inclusion is a school strategy (you are inclusive by design not chance) and it's good to recognise that diverse workplaces attract people from a wider sample and inclusive cultures outperform their peers. Inclusion usually comes from the top, through overcoming unconscious biases and make every effort to listen, create open forums for discussion, and promote people with varied backgrounds (gender, nationality, race, age) who embrace listening and inclusive values.

Your approaches to diversity reflected key skills and competencies as well as traditional activities including gender, health, medical and age.

As a result, throughout the assessment, Interviewees were able to provide practical examples of the strategies in action. Remember, an amazing organisation is one that employees would never want to leave. What better way to create such a place than to give people lots of opportunities to grow and advance – and you do

DELIVERING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

There is a culture of continuous improvement being driven, not just by the leadership team but by the whole school.

Your people and their voices were definitely valued and they were able to clearly demonstrate how they learnt from the world around them...

Across the school there was a focus on improvement in all activities which could be seen through various examples including but not limited to:

- the implementation of new approaches to address Covid Pandemic.
- The development of a new school improvement plan and governor statement embracing learning from the last Ofsted Inspection
- development of approaches to create and then enhance online teaching
- development of structures to support effective teaching and pastoral care
- development of approaches to enhance knowledge retention such as IT systems
- development of approaches to enhance communication for all stakeholders
- development of the approaches to the learning and development activities with a desire to further improve ECT induction and development.
- Improvement to wellbeing approaches

You were also vocal in describing a desire to learn from best practice internally and externally and were able to describe impact such as low staff retention levels, low sickness, and student engagement. External best practice was sought from numerous sources including other schools, from TED talks, from industry best practice and from personal development activities. People brought their learning back into the school and shared this openly. The carousel activities provided a great vehicle for sharing.

Your people were not only able to provide examples of where improvements had been made, but felt they were supported and encouraged to develop and try new approaches and learn from their mistakes within a safe and supportive environment – **this was excellent!**

CREATING SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

You have a commitment to creating sustainable success for the school based on evolution rather than revolution. More importantly, your staff agree.

The investment in resources, time, and effort in ensuring a focus on future priorities for the school was evident...

It was clear that current approaches were all based on the awareness of current and future challenges and that even during Covid, the school was performing well.

Throughout the assessment, your people were able to articulate the objectives and approaches needed to deliver success and this was complemented by an understanding of their own individual role and how they contributed. Your staff are able to articulate future priorities related to the challenges of the pandemic and the wider field of education. The level of clarity demonstrated throughout the assessment by your people was super strong and it was clear that this clarity had been achieved through updates and direct involvement and support from the leadership team.

You also provided evidence to suggest change as an activity is well received with examples including:

- the development of processes to meet the challenges of the pandemic
- the development of new ways of working including new teaching methods, performance management, communication, and observations to name but a few
- the development of the curriculum
- the development of policies and procedures relating to social distancing
- the development of the new school block and teaching facilities as well as general building upgrades

Your people also confirmed when things need to change, it's communicated through staff meetings, INSET, formally, informally, through email, or directly. It was clear that people viewed change as an ongoing part of assisting the school to deliver for the students.

You and your staff described an encouraging approach to understanding the external context in which the school operated. There were practical examples of activities including:

- your explanation of and commitment to leading by example
- supporting Community Engagement included Key stakeholders through food parcels, Asda Vouchers, laptops for students etc

- development of tailored support for ECT's from within the school and from private education providers
- Strategies to support for local charities, a school charity and red nose day etc.
- Support for DofE activities for pupils
- Adoption of best practice from external learning sources
- Thought leadership using approaches including the Carousel

Your people also provided examples of the impact for students and the challenges Covid has brought in this area.

And most importantly – your people were vocal in confirming the school is a great place to work!

INVESTORSTM IN PEOPLE

Want to get in touch?

enquiries@iipnorth.co.uk