



## NOTTINGHAM PFS

### MANAGING IMPROVEMENT BY DEVELOPING CPD OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF LEADERS THROUGH THE WIDENING OF WORK BASED OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES.

July 2010

#### SUMMARY

Playing for Success Nottingham is based upon three fully funded PFS Centres at The National Ice Centre, Nottingham Tennis Centre and Nottingham Forest Football Club. Each of these centres is linked to a different sporting partner and based within significantly different environments. In order for staff to gain valuable CPD experience of working beyond their designated centre and to provide each project with fresh eyes to review current working practices and encourage new approaches to programme delivery a scheme was set in place whereby staff at all three centres were given the opportunity to work in different Nottingham PFS centres. In addition to the core study support sessions staff were also able to take on roles for additional educational programmes delivered through our two associate centres and by leading on day time provision projects such as family learning schemes and Communicating for Success. This case study provides an over view of the value and benefits of such an approach and guide to ensuring the smooth running and delivery of such a scheme.

#### Target Group / Key Stage:

All paid staff in the day to day delivery of *PFS* Programmes

**Local Authority :**  
City of Nottingham

**Organisation:**  
Nottingham *PFS*

## **Background**

Nottingham PfS places a high value on the importance of providing staff with professional development opportunities which enable them to, widen their skills and knowledge base, build confidence and consequently have a positive impact on developing more productive creative and innovative programmes.

There has always been a willingness within Nottingham PfS to share expertise, but also recognition of limited opportunities to extend experiences in non formal education settings such as the PfS centres.

The Nottingham PfS coordinator and ICT manger have always worked across all Nottingham PfS projects as each new one was opened however opportunities for other staff initially appeared limited. In the early days staff would undertake visits to other centres and observe lessons however following staff discussions it was felt that in order for visits to other centres to have a real impact staff needed time to be fully active and to a degree embedded within different PfS learning environments and programmes. This idea was originally explored through centre exchanges between our Teaching Assistants. The TAs would swap and work in a different centre one night a week for the entire ten weeks of a PfS programme. This initiative was then extended to involve TAs spending entire terms at different Nottingham PfS Centres. Following this success it was acknowledge that the centre mangers and teachers would also benefit from working in different venues and during the Autumn term this year the teachers at Nottingham Forest and Nottingham Tennis Centre exchanged venues one day a week. Staff have also been given the opportunity to become involved in and lead a number of non PfS projects including our two Associate centres at Nottingham Castle and the Nottingham Galleries of Justice and schemes including a Double Club pilot project at Nottingham Academy which is based upon football and links with Forest but is actually being led by the Centre manager at Nottingham Tennis Centre.

## **Planning**

By planning longer term exchanges based upon staff exchanges lasting for a minimum of 1 night a week for 10 weeks ensured that as far as schools were concerned there was no change in those leading their sessions. Staff always knew where other staff were based and by taking a longer term approach it ensures that different staff are still gaining new working experiences.

## **Outcomes expected and unexpected**

- Staff became more motivated and enthused from working at different centres
- Staff gained a greater appreciation of each other's working environments
- There was an increase in the involvement and contribution of all staff towards planning
- Increase in the sense of team working and shared ownership of Nottingham Playing for Success rather than people merely focusing on their own centres
- Programmes of study became more flexible and innovative with greater risk taking
- Associate centres were able to hit the ground running as they were staffed by experienced study support staff
- Improvements in cross centre programmes
- Staff could cover each other easily and confidently when needs arise with minimum disruption to PfS programmes
- Staff could support each other more easily in delivering major events such as the 10 year celebration day event which involved all PfS staff working together with over 100 pupils from 10 different schools
- Staff with specific skills are now targeted to specific programmes across Nottingham PfS rather than just working n their own centres
- Nottingham PfS gains considerable value for money by being able to deliver

some many different projects including Communicating for Success, Family Learning Projects, skate and animate schemes, literacy and poetry days and Double club schemes, using its own staff.

## Reflections

**Pete Dudgeon** on the exchange that took place between the TAs at Nottingham Tennis Centre and Nottingham Forest

Both Chris and Leanne bring different skills and this became apparent during the staff swaps. In addition to their Teaching Assistant experience, Leanne has very good admin skills whilst Chris has good skills in terms of technical support in ICT and the support he provides in preparation for PfS sessions. At first, this presented a challenge to me as a centre manager as I had become used to working with Chris and doing a lot of admin work myself so it made me evaluate my practices and allowed me to develop further managerial skills. Also, I am constantly looking to review, tweak and adapt the programme we offer schools so that we don't become stale. Having a different member of staff working alongside me, gave me the perfect opportunity to do this. We were able to utilise the experience that Leanne had at Forest and try some similar activities here such as the "Baseline Cafe maths Activity". The involvement that Chris had in a photography project Communicating for Success programme meant that we adapted that to a PfS programme and it has been very successful. Leanne's experience of writing the termly newsletter for the Nottingham Forest Centre meant that we were able to draw on this experience to not only improve our termly newsletter but also to develop a newsletter that the pupils wrote. It was also useful as I was able to identify areas of work that we could develop as professional development targets as part of their PDR (Professional Development Review).

**Cath Cosslett** Centre Manager at the National Ice Centre reflecting on the benefits of having the TA from Nottingham Tennis Centre working at her venue

Through Chris working here once a week we have been able to use his expertise in music and photography to deliver new activities.

For example a group of pupils from Nottingham Academy recently entered an Animation competition where they were required to create a copy right free piece of music. With Chris' knowledge and support we were able to download Acid Express 7 and teach the pupils how to put together their own music.

In another activity Chris was able to offer an activity which enabled the use of the cameras. He showed the pupils a selection of 'effective' and 'less effective' photos and invited the group into a discussion based on the photos. He then organised for the group to take photos of specific objects around the NIC, taking into account background lighting, shadows, etc. These photos were then used to produce a Treasure Hunt activity around the building.

**Chris Maguire** TA at Nottingham Tennis Centre reflecting on his experiences of working in other Nottingham PfS Centres.

For the past two years I have been based at the Ace Base Study Support Centre, Nottingham Forest Study Centre, The Learning Zone at the National Ice Centre, Nottingham Castle and also the Galleries of Justice. I have found it extremely beneficial working at other centres as it has given me an insight into the working practises of others and also the working ethos of the individual centres. Working at different locations and environments enabled me to build my skills base in various areas including; working with schools that I've not worked with before, working with staff I've not worked with before and also networking with various members of staff within each centre.

**Leanne Collins.**

During the last academic year I had the opportunity to work at the Ace Base. I found the experience interesting as I was able to transfer the skills I had learnt during my years working at Nottingham Forest into the study support programme and the day-to-day running of the Centre. In particular I took responsibility for the daily administration within the Centre, for example booking transport, and keeping regular contact with schools we worked with, which included creating a new termly newsletter

**Sarah Forster** TA at The National Ice Centre reflecting on her experiences of working at other Nottingham PfS Centres

Although I have only been delivering PfS at Ace Base for one term I have already gained benefits. As the preparation for a session involves administrative work I have been able to experience the way in which another centre carries out administrative tasks such as collating evaluation data and archiving pupils' work. In doing such I have learnt different methods which will assist with my administrative tasks back at the Learning Zone and for this reason I have been able to carry out day-to-day tasks more efficiently. As part of the delivery of the non PfS project 'Skate and Animate' I was required to learn a new computer software program called Revelation Sight and Sound. The frequent use of this program enabled me to develop in-depth knowledge of activities, actions and effects which when used would enhance the achievement and quality of pupils' work. As a result of my experience and understanding of the software, when the program was used for an activity at Ace Base I was able to competently and confidently assist and share my knowledge with the pupils as well as sharing new ideas and methods with my colleagues.

**Jane Francis** Centre Teacher at Nottingham Forest reflecting on her exchange with the CM at Nottingham Tennis Centre

I was pleased to be able to have an opportunity to successfully transfer my skills and good practise from Forest to the Tennis Centre whilst also gaining experience of working in a different environment. I enjoyed the challenge of being able to access the Sportswall to enhance the children's confidence and promote team work. I was pleased to be able to take some of my activities from my Forest programme and successfully adapt them to tennis and had the opportunity to introduce a new activity based on tennis art which the children were proud to show at the Graduation.

**Pete Dudgeon** Centre Manager Nottingham Tennis Centre on his experience of working at Nottingham Forest Study Centre.

This exchange enabled me to see how PfS worked within a different setting. I had the benefit of working with Chris and other staff that I knew through Nottingham PfS as well as new staff within the football club. One of the main differences that I noticed was the partnership that the centre has with the academy side of the club, which is an important factor in the way things work at the centre. The Academy uses the centre every day sometimes right up until the pupils arrive for PfS sessions. It meant that I had to be organised in how we prepared for the sessions. I had to make sure my organisational skills were good in that I would need to have everything I needed for a Thursday ready on a Wednesday because of working at a different centre. Also the Academy lads work at volunteers at Forest and this has resulted in me trying to set up some of the academy players that train at Nottingham Tennis Centre to volunteer at Ace Base.

I was able to see if I could adapt any activities that I did at Ace Base to a football environment as well as bring some new ideas to the centre at Nottingham Forest. One such new idea was on the ground tour of The City Ground, I got the pupils to take digital cameras around with them and record in pictures different aspects of the tour.

They then made this into a video presentation using video editing software. They also made a video introduction of their presentation using an area of the ground that they had chosen. Jane has now incorporated this idea into her programme.

One spin off from my work at Nottingham Forest Study Support Centre has been the setting up of a pilot project based along the lines of Double Club called Forest Factor. During the summer term 2010, I have been working with 12 Y9 pupils from Nottingham Academy teaching them a literacy and numeracy programme in the mornings. In the afternoon, they receive football coaching from staff at Nottingham Forest Community Department. Although the 8 week programme is still in progress, my previous experience of working at Nottingham Forest and the building of links with the Community department ensured that the project has had a far stronger footing from day one

### **Next Steps**

Building on the success of these exchanges which we plan to continue we are also considering the following

- Allowing PfS groups to work across more than one centre, during their ten week programme, with staff accompanying them and delivering from a different centre. (this follows current method used in Wolverhampton)
- Talking to other regional PfS Centres about the potential for LA PfS staff exchanges.
- Looking to develop potential exchanges with staff from one or two of our partner primary schools
- Exploring means for possible accreditation of exchange experiences

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