

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Horton Grange Primary School

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE SPECIALIST: Mark Crowther

DATE: 16th February 2014

Assessment Decision

I am very pleased to report that following a rigorous assessment process Horton Grange Primary School is hereby recognised as a **Gold** Investor in People. Given the school's recent history it is important to recognise this significant achievement and to congratulate the whole team at Horton Grange, a school that absolutely embodies the spirit of the Investors in People standard. This recognition is approved for a period of 3 years.

I want to specifically thank the staff involved in the planning and organisation of this assessment as well as those I had the privilege to meet as part of the evidence gathering process. Horton Grange should be proud of its achievements and the very professional, welcoming and open attitude shown by all staff.

As part of our sustainable approach to Investors in People I will undertake a midterm 'review' after 18 months and this will ensure that you continue to pursue the ethos of the standard and are progressing with the Continuous Improvement Plan.

Feedback

This report provides feedback under the following headings:

- Significant areas of strength and good practice identified during the process
- Potential areas for further growth and development
- Your agreed key objectives
- More detailed evidence by indicator

Continuous Improvement Plan

To support the potential areas for further growth and development of Horton Grange Primary School a CIP is appended that details the actions identified as relevant.

Background to the Assessment

Horton Grange decided to undertake a full assessment against the entire Investors in People framework as a means of gaining recognition for the excellent work that has been carried out across the school in very recent years. The context or backdrop for this assessment is important to note as it is less than 5 years ago that the school was in Special Measures and quite clearly in a very different place to where it finds itself today. As this report outlines the cultural change process that has taken place is quite outstanding and testimony to the inspirational leadership, focussed management and commitment of all staff to making Horton Grange **‘the school at the end of the road where I would want to send my children’**. Staff paint a very vivid picture of what life was like at the school previously and talk in glowing terms about the transformation that has taken place based on a completely shared vision and ethos that is all about **‘Celebrating Success Together’** and **‘doing the very best for every child at the school’**. Whilst many significant strengths are apparent and explored further within this report, the assessment focussed on the agreed key objective – **To fully meet the priorities set out in the School Improvement plan (SIP) and through this to deliver outcomes for children beyond expectations. Specifically that effective learning and development activity is delivered and the impact evaluated and implemented and that effective appraisal processes are used to identify individual need and enable and recognise individual contribution to the school.**

Significant Areas of Strength

Horton Grange has a broad range of significant strengths and these go across the Investors in People framework. The specific areas that are worthy of highlighting at this stage include:-

- There is a very evident and clear ethos within the school. This ethos is shared by everybody that took part in this assessment. The strap line, Celebrating Success Together is far more than simply a banner headline, people genuinely believe that this is what the

school is all about and the culture of the school thus builds upon and reflects this very clear ethos. People talk about the culture being something quite rare, that there is a sense of the whole team working to the same vision, and this simply reflects the positive nature and view that people hold about the school.

- This ethos is built upon a very evident set of core values and again, these values relate to the Celebration of Success, the whole team philosophy, sense of belonging, the creation of a happy and friendly environment for learning and most of all, the absolute focus on the children within the school and their progress and achievement.
- In support of the vision and ethos, there is a very clear and focussed School Improvement Plan and this is shared and understood throughout the school, resulting in clear targets for staff and KPIs driven by outcome measures being evident right across the school.
- Social Responsibility is taken very seriously and this reflects the evolution and significant transformation of the school over the last four or five years. Parental involvement is hugely significant now at Horton Grange and involves a very broad range of school based activities and engagement with the parent body. As one person commented, **“This is not just a school, but a hub for the community and a source of support”**. Stakeholder engagement goes wider than the parent body and embraces a broad range of key stakeholders.
- There is an absolute culture of continuous learning and learning and development has, and continues to play a huge part in the development and success of Horton Grange. There is an absolute commitment from the senior leadership team to home-grown talent and to ensure that a full and comprehensive range of learning and development activities related to the school improvement plan are embedded across the organisation.

- CPD is a prominent feature within the school and is talked about in very positive terms by all staff. This contributes to the culture of continuous learning as it is a very regular and well regarded activity.
- Performance management processes within the school are robust and very effective in terms of the measurement of performance, identification of training and development need and ensuring that individual contribution is both recognised and valued and yet, in line with the priorities outlined within the school improvement plan.
- Of particular note is the work-life balance culture that exists within the school. Whilst it is acknowledged and recognised that the teaching profession does generally suffer from a long hours culture in terms of both classroom based time and the preparation time, as well as marking, Horton Grange take a particular view that ensures the 'macho hours' culture is avoided and, whilst people accept the work needs to be done and this does require some out-of-hours commitment, this is not stretched to the point where people feel unnecessarily pressured or feel undue stress. PPA time is of significant note and this is higher than the national average and again, regarded favourably by people within the school as contributing to a healthier work-life balance.
- Leadership is held in high regard by staff within the school. There is evidence of a clear direction from the senior leadership team and the contribution that leadership has made to the ethos of the school is incredibly clear. Leadership and management are equally well regarded and the way in which people are encouraged to develop management and leadership capability as well as contribute to creating the environment of success that Horton Grange clearly strive for is obvious.

- Reward and recognition is one of those potentially quite difficult areas within education, given the constraints placed upon the school's natural ability to reward people financially. Horton Grange get around this in many ways and do provide an environment based on a whole culture of recognition and attempt wherever possible to provide people with ongoing feedback, thanks, praise and recognition for a job well done. This builds on the ethos of Celebrating Success and reinforces the sentiment that **"Good is not good enough anymore"**.
- Clearly, much time and effort has been invested in developing effective people management processes and these are evident in the areas of appraisal, CPD and the holistic approach to learning and development. People report that these have all had an impact on both individual and team performance and this runs through to seeing improvements in performance against the key performance indicators.

Potential Areas for Further Growth and Development

Whilst in Investors of People terms, Horton Grange Primary School clearly stacks up incredibly well against the whole framework, and as a Gold Investor in People is also doing many, many things very effectively. However, as in any organisation, there are always small areas for further growth and development. For the purposes of this report these will be called **'1 percenters'**, to demonstrate the small, but potentially positive impact that work in these areas could have on the organisational culture and future performance of Horton Grange.

There are four specific areas identified and these are offered as opportunities for further development and should not, in any way, be seen as a criticism of the way in which the school is currently being managed and led. The four areas are:-

- Whilst the whole area of **reward and recognition** is viewed very positively across the school there is, nevertheless, still a sense from some quarters that even more could be done to add further thanks and praise for staff. This has been described as **“It’s just the little things that could create even greater value and sense of wellbeing within the school”**. Hand in hand with this, is an observation by some people that **“Leadership could be even more visible.”** Again, this is not to be seen as a criticism of the senior leadership team who are held in extremely high regard, however, it is felt by some staff that even more visibility would further enhance peoples feel good factor in terms of how they are valued and regarded by the senior leaders within the school. **(6.16)**
- **Learning styles** – Much has been done to ensure that CD activity is as engaging for people as possible. Indeed, the school is at pains to stress that didactic learning is not an option when it comes to CPD and that people are encouraged, both in the delivery and the receipt of CPD activity to engage and be an active participant. However, it may add further value to individuals approach to learning if the school was to support a more proactive approach to the identification of individual learning styles. This would involve a series of short exercises to enable people to access the information required to identify their own preferred learning style and then use this information to enable people to more effectively access learning as well as benefit from the impact of that learning. **(2.10, 2.15)**
- **Recruitment** – It is recognised that the school attempts to involve as many people as possible in the recruitment process in terms of individuals and teams contribution to that process. However, there are times when people feel as though they have not been sufficiently consulted or involved and feel as though the school, and therefore by definition, the senior leadership team, are undertaking the process and it is only the outcome that is then communicated. This, as much as anything, may be an opportunity

for the senior leadership team to raise people's awareness as to how the process works and some of the challenges faced when recruiting for certain posts. Those challenges include the difficulty of engaging all staff, given the nature of the post to be recruited to. Nevertheless, this is another area for further consideration and will lead to people feeling even more engaged in, in this case, the recruitment process. **(3.27)**

- **Challenge** – Examples exist where people have readily felt able to challenge ways of working and decisions that have been made for the good of the school. However, alongside this there is still some sense that some people feel less able to challenge. Those same people do, however, recognise that this is not about the attitude or behaviour of the senior leadership team, more likely it is a product of **“cultural baggage”**. This **“cultural baggage”** is a hangover, partly from the period in which the school was in special measures and the very fraught and challenging nature of that period of time, which has clearly left some psychological scars for some members of staff, allied to a more traditional educational culture, which perhaps doesn't readily lend itself to automatic challenge. This is an interesting area of development as it places an onus on the senior leadership team to continue to enable and support people in the way in which they are able to challenge decisions and ways of working. It is apparent that leaders and managers regularly and as a matter of course invite people to comment, to contribute and to make suggestions. However, those people, for whatever reason, do not always come forth with their views or opinions and this is as much about that **“cultural baggage”** as it is about any other aspect of management or leadership within the school. **(7.18) (these are highlighted on page 24 in red on the framework sheet).**

Key Objectives

As part of this assessment process, the focus was on the corporate objective of fully meeting the priorities set out in the SIP, and through this, to deliver outcomes for children that are beyond expectations. This takes into account the potentially very challenging nature of the catchment within the school, whereby children enter in year 1 with a lower than average level of ability including many children who, perhaps, are even unable to speak any English. The school prides itself on its ability to help support and progress those children to a point beyond expectations. The measure of this is that effective learning and development activity for staff is delivered and that the impact of this activity is both evaluated and implemented and thus has a direct effect on what goes on within the classroom and, indeed, the culture of the school. A second measure is the whole issue of performance management and ensuring that effective appraisal is used for all staff that identifies individualised need and enables and supports individual contribution to be recognised, that contribution being to the SIP particularly, but also to the ethos and daily life of the school. It is evident from the assessment process that the SIP is a clear guiding light for activity within the school. The SIP is widely shared, it is understood and there is a clear focus, both for individual members of staff and within subject teams and for subject leaders on how they may incorporate within their plans the needs identifiable within the overall SIP. Learning and development, as already suggested, is highly prioritised within Horton Grange. There is a very comprehensive and regular programme of learning and development activity within the school, access to a significant and broad range of learning and development activity outside the school, including the benefits of being part of the Exceed Alliance and the opportunities this brings in terms of networking and sharing of best practice. Learning is evaluated well, there are processes in place to do this and the real emphasis is on the impact that the learning can then have within the classroom environment. As part of the assessment I was privileged to sit in on one of the CPD sessions and this was conducted by an outstanding teacher from a neighbouring school who

shared her practice with teaching staff within Horton Grange. It was clear from the way in which this was delivered and the discussions that were taking place that this would have a direct impact on the way in which staff then taught this particular subject area in the future.

There are many aspects to the effectiveness of learning and development and particular note should be made of coaching and mentoring across the school which is widely taken up, both for qualified and unqualified staff. Horton Grange is developing a tremendous reputation for the number of students that it develops and the quality of NQTs is self evident. Associated with this is the need for a robust and regular staff appraisal process. This process is very well structured and managed and incorporates an initial appraisal in September, around the specific direction emanating from the SIP, a midyear review in January and an end of year review in the summer term. This enables and ensures that people are focused on the specific targets required to enhance school performance. However, within the appraisal, people are encouraged to develop objectives and targets across at least three key areas, including specific teaching and learning targets, personal development and, interestingly, parental involvement. Individual contribution is therefore recognised within the appraisal process and this ensures that clear connections are made between individuals, teams and whole school performance.

Business Strategy

As part of the investors framework Horton Grange is expected to have a strategy for improving the performance of the organisation and that this is clearly defined and understood. This area of the standard highlights significant strengths for Horton Grange Primary School. There is a very clear sense of vision, strategy and purpose and this largely emanates from the SIP which sets out clear targets for the whole school and these are further communicated throughout the school using the performance management process. This enables the four main OFSTED themes of leadership and management, achievement, teaching and learning and behaviour to be addressed and a

structured and systematic process is in place to enable that plan to be shared and understood by all staff. Measurable performance objectives are evident at foundation, Key stage I and Key stage II levels within the school. The SIP is further utilised to inform subject action plans and these are reviewed on a regular basis as well. The appraisal process enables individual targets to be established so that each individual member of staff understands and contributes to achieving the overall school improvement plan. There are an absolutely clear set of values which underpin the ethos of the school. It is hugely rewarding to hear everybody talk in unison about the nature of those values and the very positive ethos that exists at Horton Grange. This is testament to the work that the senior leadership team have been so keen to promote over recent years.

The notion of Celebrate Success Together is absolutely at the heart of everything that is done within the school. This is not only about the act of Celebrating Success, which is a very regular feature of day to day school life for both children and staff, but is about providing a safe and happy environment where people feel a sense of belonging, where people share the same vision and a whole team philosophy is apparent. People talk about there being a happy and friendly environment for learning and that you can feel the positive morale. Comments such as **“What we have here is absolutely outstanding and is based on a whole team approach”** are very common.

In terms of the planning within the school, this is, or has been, a senior leadership domain; however, it is pleasing to note that the governing body are now going to be getting much more involved in that process, rather than taking the more traditional stance of simple signing off the SIP. This is heartening as this will provide an additional level of both leadership and accountability. The ethos of the school is further supported by the number of people who talk about judging the success of the school by **“ Would I send my children here if it was at the end of my street?”** and clearly peoples answer to this is a strong affirmative. The SIP fosters and encourages a target driven approach but that this approach is very much about outcomes. This is significant as people talk about it being the job of everyone to contribute to the schools results. People recognise the

role that KPIs play in enhancing the quality of life within the school, improving pupil progress and achievement and thus enabling clear measurement to take place of that improvement. The SIP is dissected and devolved to all year groups to subject and individual level and this is then embraced within the appraisal process which drives performance improvement.

The school is very clear about and proactive in its approach to social responsibility. A very evident example of this is the huge investment of both time and resources into developing significant and far reaching relationships with parents. This was certainly not the case when the school was in special measures and indeed, learning has taken place from that era to ensure that not only are parents encouraged and supported to take an active role within the school, but they are involved on a very practical level in that they attend children's assemblies, they are invited into the classroom and are provided equally with a full range of learning activities for their own education. This area of social responsibility pays huge dividends as the impact this has on the parent's ability to support the child's education is significant. Over and above this, there is significant community involvement, with the local council for mosques, local children's centre and relationships with other education providers locally. As one person described, **"Horton Grange is a hub for the community"**, and this is certainly evident in the range of community based activities that take place. Horton Grange is also very aware of its environment and is actively engaged in a range of activities around, both environmental and energy issues on a regular basis.

It is worthy of note that people within the school make very positive comments in relation to the values and ethos and also the whole issue of ensuring performance improvement. For example, the following comments were noted in relation to this indicator. **"Celebrating Success is clearly understood and believed throughout the school"**, **"KPIs are used to constantly track children's progress. We understand this as the key measure of success."** **"I have never enjoyed a job more in my life"**, **"We work as a team to achieve school targets and no child is left behind"**. These comments reinforce the view, that the ethos of the school is incredibly strong, very much shared

and understood, and are the heart of everything that goes on within the day to day life of Horton Grange.

Learning and Development Strategy

It is evident that the role that learning and development plays in enhancing school performance is completely understood. There is an absolute culture of learning and development within Horton Grange and this culture, whilst clearly applying to the children and their progress and development, is very much though, about the staff and the way in which they are supported through a range of learning and development interventions to be the best that they can be and as one person stated, **“To contribute to, how can we make the school better”**. There is very much a philosophy within the senior leadership team of growing our own and talent spotting within the school is widely quoted by many staff. Many opportunities have been provided for people to progress, to become part of the senior leadership team and to develop further in their teaching and non-teaching roles. The senior leadership team regard learning and development as an absolute priority for achieving the targets within the SIP and, as previously mentioned, learning features heavily in the rigorous performance management process.

There is structured development throughout the school and this runs through from teaching assistants, pre-qualification, NQT development, NQT +1 development as well as middle and senior leader’s development as well; but it must be stressed, that all this learning and development is related to the SIP targets.

It is interesting to consider one example of how this operates within a subject area and in the area of maths a very eloquent example was provided where people are working to clear targets and aspirations, where peoples training and development needs are identified, action plans put in place and action taken to develop people appropriately. That development is then evaluated and the impact measured and all of this is undertaken to enhance performance across the school from a maths perspective. People are naturally encouraged to develop the capabilities and again, the

issue of talent spotting is good evidence of this, as is the very impressive CPD structure. People are able to access a range of innovative and flexible learning and development opportunities including a very thorough and planned programme of in house development, informal and more formal coaching and mentoring arrangements, the school CPD calendar, lots of examples of external training programmes and courses which people identify both for themselves and are encouraged to go on by their line managers and senior leadership team and increasingly, the use of online learning and development provision. Notice has been taken that clearly people have different learning styles and thus much of the CPD activity is based on knowledge and experience of people's preferences. However, as noted in the areas of further development, a more formalised recognition of individuals learning styles may help to further enhance the return on investment on learning activity.

Horton Grange is a member of the Exceed Alliance, a network/partnership of seven local schools within Bradford and this is further seen as a real benefit to learning and development in that there is the opportunity to share ideas and best practice across a local and neighbouring educational network. Lesson observation is clearly a regular aspect of school life and not just at Horton Grange, but nationally. These are done in two main ways at Horton Grange; short drop in observations and more formal observations where people are provided with immediate feedback and this is used to contribute to the learning process to enable people to receive regular and immediate feedback on performance. Various comments were made about the approach and commitment to learning and development including, **“This school has been brilliant to me in sending me on courses and encouraging me to develop. I have regular meeting with my manager to discuss my development. I feel really, really supported in my role”**. Continuous learning is therefore an absolute part of the culture at Horton Grange and this is completely role modelled by leaders and managers and embraced by staff across the school.

People Management Strategy

An absolute feature and natural part of life at Horton Grange is the diversity that exists across the school. This diversity enables the school to thrive and is reflected within the culture and attitudes of all staff. There is absolute equality of access to learning and development and to an environment and culture which encourages people to share and contribute ideas to improve performance. Recruitment processes are robust and there is an explicit commitment to ensure that the whole process is simply about ensuring that Horton Grange arrives at the best candidate for the post, indeed, the best candidate for Horton Grange. Appropriate training has been undertaken around safer recruitment and the aforementioned diversity is embraced as part of the philosophy that runs through recruitment and selection processes. Giving and receiving feedback is simply part of the way in which Horton Grange works and as somebody commented, **“It goes to the heart of what we do and how we feel”**. Thanks and praise indeed does go a long way to reinforcing the positive nature of the culture. Managers talk readily about asking people for their opinion and asking, **“what do you think about ...”** as being a strategy for engaging with people and encouraging people to contribute ideas and suggestions.

The whole area of work-life balance is really very interesting at Horton Grange and any activities beyond the normal school day are deliberately kept to a focused minimum. It is acknowledged that some learning and development, preparation and marking will take place outside of the core school hours and yet there is an absolute understanding of this as being part and parcel of life at the school but people are in no way made to feel as though they should be working long hours. In fact, it was interesting to note people talk about the doors being locked and being told to go home at the end of the school day.

PPA time is significant; staff are given 12.5% PPA time, which is 2.5% above the national average and this is well regarded and clearly has an impact on, not just work-life balance but the quality of team work and its impact on teaching and learning.

Leadership and Management Strategy

There is absolutely no doubt that effective management and leadership is at the heart of the transformation of Horton Grange Primary School. Manager's talk readily about the whole team philosophy that exists and the clear sense of expectation that people have of managers and leaders is also apparent. People recognise the role which managers play in contributing to the positive culture and readily talk about the supporting role that managers take to the way in which they manage people. Again, the performance management process is used to ensure that managers are regularly reviewed in terms of their management capability and feedback is a clear and present part of that process. Management development has played a large part in CPD and the school is proud that staff are encouraged to be exposed to the senior leadership team as part of their own personal and potentially, career development. It is understood that leadership is the key to improvement across the school and also the key to an outstanding rating from OFSTED when they next visit.

The leadership ethos is one of shared responsibility and that shared responsibility is very much about creating an environment where people feel able to express themselves and to contribute to enhancing the experience of the children within the school. One telling comment was that, **"I no longer hear that it's not my job to do that"**, and this was used as a means of illustrating the changes that have occurred within the culture of the school. The senior leadership team are well aware of the importance of succession planning and this forms part of their thinking around talent spotting and indeed, enabling people to experience the senior leadership environment in what is potentially quite a safe and supportive manner.

Management Effectiveness

This part of the standard concerns management effectiveness and whether or not managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people. A key part of this is the ability to role model and it is very apparent that, particularly the senior leadership team, are regarded as role models for inspirational leadership and this is exemplified by the way in which the school has progressed so much in what is relatively a short space of time. People talk about managers being **“firm but fair”, “flexible in their approach”, “having a strategic focus”, and “being very aware of their key stakeholders”**. One person commented about the senior leadership team that, **“I look at them and think wow”**. This was a means of expressing that it is a whole team approach and the team will not stop until they are the best.

Coaching is regarded as very much part of what we do and it was commented that actually a formalised approach to coaching is no longer really needed, although appraisal does exist for people to fall back on, however, a very much more informal approach to coaching is adopted and this includes the drop in observations previously mentioned and using feedback processes to develop people’s confidence.

Information sharing is another important and evident part of the way in which the school functions. This is done in many, many ways, not least of which are the subject teams, the use of PPA time and CPD as well but this results in a much improved culture based around openness and trust and enables best practice and the sharing of new approaches to be fostered. People report that managers are very clear about the purpose and vision for the school and one person commented that in terms of being able to give feedback that, **“they were just able to tell their manager how it is and feel very comfortable in doing this”**. Further comments include; **“I have a really high regard for my manager and how they manage and lead me, this is based on trust and respect, confidence and admiration”, “My manager talks things through with me and is also prepared to show me how to do things”, “Managers and leaders here motivate and inspire through their enthusiasm and passion”** and one person specifically stated that **“the**

transformation within 4 years from Special Measures to good with outstanding features was entirely due to inspirational leadership”. It is fair to say that management and leadership within Horton Grange are getting an awful lot right in terms of the way that they act as role models and clearly demonstrate and show the way for people to follow.

Recognition and Reward

Recognition and reward is, or can be, something of a challenge at times within a public sector setting, particularly when people think about reward being of a financial nature. Clearly significant constraints exist around the schools ability to financially reward or incentivise its staff. However, those avenues that are open to the senior leadership team at Horton Grange are used and these include additional responsibility allowances where possible and rewards for attendance, this being a day off. This is actually quoted by a lot of staff as being a significant measure of the way in which they feel rewarded, whereby full attendance for a term can result in a day off as reward for that contribution. Feedback and recognition are clearly part of the way things are at Horton Grange and different mechanisms are used to attempt to recognise the contribution efforts that staff make, including verbal feedback as well as more formal newsletters. It is understood that people need recognition and that giving people time is a part and parcel of that recognition process. One manager commented that **“as soon as I see something very good going on I will congratulate the person and I will use what they are doing as a means of demonstrating that I value their contribution”**. Horton Grange is very good at picking up on and celebrating people’s successes and this applies to both children and staff. This is done through success celebration assemblies for the children but also recognition and celebration of success for staff at CPD meetings. This is all about developing the culture of ‘good is not good enough’ anymore and ensuring that people are striving to constantly improve overall performance. When asked about recognition, people report feeling valued and generally well recognised, although, as in the areas of further development, it is

also noted that more can always be done in this area. Lots of intangible reward and recognition strategies are used and these include thanks and praise, the degree of autonomy allowed, attendance awards, incentive vouchers and feedback from observations.

Involvement and Empowerment

A whole range of methods are used to engage with and consult staff across the school. I was able to sit in on the weekly staff briefing. This is for all staff across the school and involves a two way dialog between representatives of the senior leadership team and staff talking about what was going on within school the following week, a run through the diary and just giving people the opportunity to engage with and contribute to activities within the school day and week.

Information sharing through newsletters from each year group every half term and the monthly heads newsletter further adds to information being passed through the school. One comment from the senior leadership team stressed the importance of engagement in that they were very conscious it is not all about the senior leadership team and thus they are very aware and keen to encourage all staff to bring issues to senior leadership as appropriate. People are encouraged to get involved in day to day decision making and the new library is a good example of this where staff from various areas have contributed to the design and development of a new library within the school. People generally report having a degree of freedom and autonomy to make decisions within their own roles but also appreciate where the boundaries lie in terms of that decision making process. PPA time is again quoted here, as being a really good example of how the school is creating an environment where people are looking to continuously improve. PPA time is used very effectively on the whole and specifically around sharing, planning and the sharing of ideas. The whole area of challenge is an interesting one and there are some contradictions at play here, where, on the whole people do report that they feel able to challenge existing ways of working or existing practices or ideas and indeed, can provide examples where following that challenge, new

ways of working have been introduced. It is though, interesting to note, that some staff do still appear to carry some cultural baggage associated with a combination of the impact of special measures and the nature of working within education. They describe this as meaning that they feel less able to challenge when afforded the opportunity. That is why this is simply not a criticism of the senior leadership team but will help the senior leadership team in being aware that some people may have this cultural paradigm within which their current thinking is placed. It is very telling and I guess to be expected that when people talk about ownership and pride within the school the absolute focus is on the child and the child's growth and progression. People do take a genuine sense of pride in seeing the impact of all the schools efforts on the progress and achievement of children within the school.

Learning and Development

As previously stated, learning and development is a clear part of the improvement strategy at Horton Grange. Indicator 8 concerns whether or not people learn and develop effectively. There are a very broad range of strategies in place to support peoples learning and development. Inevitably and particularly within the current climate, effective use of resource is paramount and the use of a broad range of internal and external training, CPD, shadowing and coaching and mentoring ensures that the resource use is as effective as possible. CPD contributes to a culture of learning and it is very clear that learning is a very valued part of school life. It is important, of course, that learning has an impact and there is a focus on what people will do with their learning, for example, following CPD sessions. Much mention has already been made of the way in which managers and staff not only encourage both informal and formal opportunities for learning, but use a range of strategies to further enhance the experience, this emanates from the whole ethos of the importance of learning and development to the progress of the children within the school and it is clear that learning and development is having a significant impact on performance. Again

the Exceed Alliance and PPA time, as well as CPD, are discussed at length by people as being really high quality vehicles for learning. Managers particularly talk about the use of coaching and mentoring and their skill in the use of open ended questions to prompt reflection and reflective practice and thinking and it should be stated here that much praise should go to the senior leadership team of the school for embracing and enabling a culture that is so supportive of learning and development as a means by which performance can be enhanced.

Performance Measurement

This refers to the previously discussed investment in people, improving the performance of the organisation and mention has already been made in a number of ways by which this is happening. It is evident from the report so far that a number of key factors are prominent within Horton Grange. These are that learning and development is regarded as key to organisational performance and has played a huge role in improving the performance of the school from Special Measures to its current position. The investment and understanding of the importance of that investment is both clear and considerable. Appraisal and CPD play a prominent and significant role within the school and contribute again to the measurement of performance and as one person commented, **“We now have a very professional dialogue regarding the impact of learning in practice”**, and this further supports the view that learning isn't simply an input based activity but very much about the outcomes for the individual and from that, the impact in the classroom. People do talk about the fact that the abundance of learning and development related to both CPD and their own appraisal process have all improved their own and their teams performance. It is widely accepted and quantifiable that this investment of both time and money has impacted positively on KPIs, particularly around child progress and achievement. The return on that investment is consciously reported to a range of key stakeholders including Central Government, the local authority, the Governors, parents through both regular newsletters and drop in sessions

with the Head. It is also pleasurable to note that the learning and development has also contributed to people's aspirational progress and career prospects. This has led to internal promotion as part of a very clear approach to succession planning but also to helping people develop in order that they might further their career outside of Horton Grange as well.

In Summary, it is very clear that a tangible relationship exists between the school's investment in its people and its performance through the actual results the school achieves.

Continuous Improvement

It is fair to say that the last four years has been a major and significant journey for Horton Grange. The progress made simply could not have been achieved had there not been a focus and determination to continuously improve practices across the school. Horton Grange is very open and receptive to external feedback and whilst there are the obvious sources for this, for example OFSTED, there are other means by which Horton Grange has proactively gone out of its way to seek that external commentary. Investors in People is one example as is Investors in Pupils, however, it is striking to note that parents again feature at this point and one of the strategies used to engage with parents and gain their feedback to enhance the way in which the school manages and develops its people is to encourage parents to use post it notes at parent's evenings. As one person commented, **"We are always looking to improve how we manage and develop our people"**. As previously mentioned, opportunities to join the senior leadership team for experience and development is commonplace and other strategies, including internal communications and feedback have both been enhanced as a result of the investment already made in those processes. The school engages regularly in staff and parent surveys as well as undertaking an annual meeting with staff in addition to appraisal and this annual meeting is used to enable staff to promote their own thoughts and ideas about how life for them and life within the school generally can be improved.

When asked whether Horton Grange is a great place to work, everybody without exception responded in the affirmative, many without reservation. When asked why, many reasons were forthcoming, including; **“The impact of the Head”, “Doing school clubs because I want to is my choice rather than being asked to do it”, “Refreshing change to work for people who are inspired”, “Feel part of a team”, “This school is really going places”, “The people I work with here are just brilliant. They constantly share resources, ideas and planning”, “There is so much support around and we are learning all the time from different people with different perspectives”, “The school is really good with resources because it is all about what do we need and what can we use to help the children learn”** and finally, **“Leadership support for personal development is always constructive, well planned and includes what I want to learn”**.

There can be little doubt from this report that Horton Grange fulfils the vast majority of the requirements of the Investors in People framework. However, it is much more than that. Horton Grange have created a tremendously positive, supportive yet focussed and forward thinking ethos which is clearly driving school improvements, performance but most importantly and as an echo of the many comments made around the culture of the school it is all about ensuring that **“we do the best we can for our children and that no child is left behind”**.

Continuous Improvement Plan

Business Issue	Suggested Action(s)	Potential Benefits / Impact of Taking No Action	Suggested Timescale	Potential Solutions / Support Available
What	How	Why	When	Who
Reward and Recognition	Senior Leadership Team to be even more conscious of the need to be visible and at every opportunity to recognise the contribution made by all staff.	Positive impact on well being and morale.	Ongoing	SLT
Learning Styles – maximising return on investment in learning activity.	Formally identify individual staff's preferred learning styles and build this knowledge into the appraisal and supervision process to more accurately plan individual development.	Greater return on investment as learning methods are closely matched to individual preference thus facilitating greater learning opportunity.	3 months	SLT Consultancy support to the process through use of appropriate tools – Honey & Mumford & VAK- -idg to support as required.
Recruitment	SLT to look at how people are involved and consulted in the recruitment process particularly when staff are being recruited for their specific area of the school.	Further involvement of staff not only ensures they are valued but their contribution to the recruitment process may add further value in terms of insight and feedback.	3 months	SLT
Challenge – 'cultural baggage'	Recognise the lasting impact of Special Measures and the cultural baggage evident in educational circles. Be aware	Value of challenge, involvement and participation if extended to all staff at all opportunities can only benefit the school.	Ongoing	SLT

	of this when enabling and promoting challenge and perhaps use this as a means of encouraging all people to contribute.			
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Investors in People Framework Topic Map - The areas for which you have been assessed are shaded in grey

PLAN				DO				REVIEW	
01: BUSINESS STRATEGY	02: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	03: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	04: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	05: MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS	06: RECOGNITION & REWARD	07: INVOLVEMENT & EMPOWERMENT	08: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	09: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	10: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
THE STANDARD TOP MANAGERS SHOULD MAKE SURE (AND THEIR PEOPLE SHOULD CONFIRM) THAT:									
The organisation has a vision / purpose, strategy and plan (1,2) People are involved in planning (4,5,6) Representative groups (where appropriate) are consulted when developing the plan (3)	Learning priorities are clear and linked to the plan (2) Resources for learning and development are made available (1,3) The impact will be evaluated (4)	People are encouraged to contribute ideas (1,5) There is equality of opportunity for development and support (2,3,4)	Managers are clear about the capabilities they need to lead, manage and develop people (1,2) People know what effective managers should be doing (3)	Managers are effective and can describe how they lead, manage and develop people (1,2,3,4)	People believe they make a difference (2) People believe their contribution is valued (1,3)	Ownership and responsibility is encouraged (1,3) People are involved in decision – making (2)	People's learning and development needs are met (1,2,3)	Investment in learning can be quantified (1,2) Impact can be demonstrated (3,4,5)	Evaluation results in improvements to people strategies and management (1,2,3)
YOUR CHOICE TOP MANAGERS SHOULD MAKE SURE (AND THEIR PEOPLE SHOULD CONFIRM) THAT:									
Clear core values relate to vision and strategy (7,11,13,17,19,23,24) Key performance indicators are used to improve performance (9,15,21) Social responsibility is taken into account in the strategy (10,12,16,18,22,25) People and stakeholders are involved in strategy development (8,14,20)	The learning and devt strategy builds capability (5,8,12) Plan take account of learning styles (10,15) People help make decisions about their own learning (9,13,14,16) Learning and development is innovative and flexible (6) There is a culture of continuous learning (7,11,17)	The recruitment process is fair, efficient and effective (6,11,14,19,22,27) A diverse, talented workforce is created (7,12,15,20,23,28) A work-life balance strategy meets the needs of its people (8,13,16,21,24,29) Constructive feedback is valued (9,17,25) The structure makes the most of people's talents (10,18,26)	Leadership and management capabilities for now and the future are defined (4,9) Managers are helped to acquire these capabilities (5,6,10,11) Leadership and management strategy link to business strategy, taking account of external good practice (7) Everyone is encouraged to develop leadership capabilities (8,12,13)	Managers are role models of leadership, teamwork and knowledge sharing (5,6,7,9,10,13,14,15,16,17,20,22,23) Coaching is part of the culture (8,12,19,25) People are helped to develop their careers (11,18) There is a culture of openness and trust (21,24)	Reward and recognition strategies link to business strategy and are externally benchmarked (4,6,8,9,12,15,18) Representative groups are consulted (where appropriate) (5,14) What motivates people is understood (10,16) Success is celebrated (11,17) Benefits strategy goes beyond legal requirements (7) Colleagues' achievements are recognized (13,19)	Effective consultation and involvement is part of the culture (4,6,7,12,13,17) People are supported and trusted to make decisions (9,15) Knowledge and information are shared (5,10,14) People are committed to success (16) There is a culture of continuous improvement (8,11) People can challenge the way things work (18) There is a sense of ownership and pride in working for the organisation (19)	Learning and development resources are used effectively (4,8,13) Learning is an everyday activity (11,18) Innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development are used (5,14) People are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential (9) All learning is valued and celebrated and is an everyday activity (6,10,17) Mentoring is used (7,20) Personal development is supported (12,15,16,19)	The contribution of people strategies is measured and evaluated (6,10) Impact on key performance indicators can be described (7) Performance improves as a result (11,13,14) Career prospects improve (12) Flexible and effective approaches to measuring return on investment are used (8) Return on investment in people is reported to stakeholders (9)	Self review and information from external reviews are used (4,5,10) Effective feedback methods are used to understand people's views on how they are managed (6,7,11,12) Internal and external benchmarking are used (8) People's views on how they are managed improves (9,13,14) People believe it's a great place to work (15)

