



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

South
of England

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REPORT



Presented by Joanna Gillingham

Senior Investors in People Specialist

On behalf of Investors in People South of England

17th July 2015

Project: 14-04768

Investors in People South of England is delivered
by Grant Thornton UK LLP under License from UKCES
E: enquiries@IIPsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk
W: <http://IIPsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk>
T: 020 7728 3456

30 Finsbury Square
London
EC2P 2YU
Company Reg. no.: OC307742



Commercial in Confidence

Contents

Recommendation and next steps.....	2
Assessment process.....	2
Findings.....	3
Points for reflection.....	7
Maximimising the IIP process.....	10
Customer satisfaction.....	11
Promoting continuous improvement.....	11
Appendix A: Outcomes Table.....	12
Appendix B: Governance Model.....	13



Commercial in Confidence

Recommendation and next steps

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for Investors in People Specialists by Investors in People – United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills, I am totally satisfied that **West Hill Primary School** continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard for Gold accreditation. Congratulations to everyone within the school community for this tremendous achievement.

Investors in People accreditation is granted indefinitely, with a proviso that an interaction is undertaken within 18 months of accreditation and a full assessment takes place no greater than 3 years apart. For West Hill the next full assessment should take place by June 2018. Assessments can be undertaken at any time and more frequent assessments are recommended to maintain levels of good practice and continuous improvement. Our next step is to meet in September to discuss the feedback from this assessment visit and agree how you can take the development suggestions forward.

I would like to thank all those people that took part in discussions for their positive approach and commitment to the process. I appreciate people giving up their time to support the ongoing improvement and development of processes.

Assessment process

West Hill Primary School is located on a single site in the village of West Hill, close to Ottery St Mary in Devon. The school is nationally recognised for high levels of achievement and is rated as Outstanding by OFSTED. In 2013 the school was ranked number one in Devon and joint twenty-first in the country. West Hill Primary School was first accredited as an Investor in People in June 2003 and in 2012 achieved Gold accreditation.

This assessment gathered feedback from staff on the effectiveness of people leadership and management within the school. Discussions were themed around the vision and values of the School and the degree to which people feel resourced and empowered to deliver that vision.

Evidence gathering took place on the 13th and 15th of July. I was able to speak with fourteen members of the staff team which represents 47% of the staff at the School. The recommended range is between 25% and 70% for an organisation of your size. I was also able to talk with four Governors, including the Chair of Governors, who very kindly gave up their time to support the process.

All 196 Evidence Requirements were assessed: the 157 of the wider IIP framework and the 39 of the core Standard. Positive evidence was obtained that 173 of these requirements are being met. Organisations need to achieve 165 evidence requirements to be awarded Gold. Appendix A shows the Evidence Requirements that have been achieved by West Hill Primary School.

This report summarises the findings of the assessment. It aims to celebrate the good practice identified and present the suggestions for ongoing improvement that arose from discussions. It is hoped that this feedback will support West Hill in the ongoing development of management & leadership processes. Staff comments are directly quoted to support findings throughout the report.



Commercial in Confidence

Findings

West Hill Primary School definitely deserves to be recognised as a Gold level Investor in People. This award acknowledges and celebrates the excellent leadership and governance found at the school. The Leadership team enables all staff to create an environment where all children are encouraged to maximise their potential and aspire to be 'outstanding'. The leadership team effectively support and coach staff and their leadership style helps to ensure that colleagues remain motivated and able to offer an outstanding learning environment to children. One of the great things about the school is its clarity of vision and ethos which shines through all discussions with staff. Everyone has high expectations of achievement both for pupils and themselves but this expectation is balanced by a caring and nurturing approach to working with each other. Values are role modeled by everyone and demonstrating care, tolerance, trust and respect are the norms by which people work together across the school.

The strengths that have been identified and support West Hill in achieving and retaining Gold IIP accreditation are:

- A drive and clear vision for success that supports excellence and challenge;
- Inspirational and informed leadership that empowers staff and gives them confidence in the future;
- A learning culture that encourages individual ownership and accountability for performance;
- Recognition and pride in the success of the whole School community.

Employee feedback

The feedback from people I interviewed was consistently positive and emphasised the pride and enjoyment people have in the success of the West Hill. These quotes provide a great flavour of the range of positive comments.



Celebrating the positives ...

'Staff are motivated and driven. We continually look to see what needs to be done to improve.'

'The values reaffirm what we want to be as a school. What sort of community we want to be.'

'We have strong leadership with a positive and informed vision for the future'

'We are really trusted to get on and do the job.'

'I feel very fortunate to work with Mrs Nield. She is always up to date with current thinking.'

'I think our Headteacher really has got the interest of the school at heart.'

'The senior team is open to suggestions and compromise.'

'Our school is always ahead of things.'

'At conferences people always ask, 'What are you doing at West Hill?' That gives you confidence.'



Commercial in Confidence

Vision and aspirations

During the last six years of supporting West Hill with Investors in People accreditation I have always encountered a consistency of vision for the school and I have been impressed with the way the school maintains a focus on its essential values and culture. Creating a stimulating learning environment in which children and all members of the school community can learn and grown is at the heart of the school ethos and this is underpinned by a nurturing and caring attitude that values uniqueness and diversity. Excellence in teaching and learning is understood to be the foundation on which success is achieved and high expectations are set in every aspect of school life.

The values of the school remain clear to all and these values do shape behaviour as people are motivated to act in accordance with them. Care, respect and trust in others are values consistently demonstrated by everyone in the school and these are the behaviours role modelled by the leadership team. This means that staff can confirm that these values influence the way the school operates and are essential elements of maintaining success in the future.

In 2014 the West Hill values were reviewed and updated to reflect cooperative and British values. It is great to see that the Governing Body led this review and continue to have ownership of the mission and ethos of the school. The school values are routinely shared with pupils and are discussed with staff at the start of the school year. In 2015 the British values will be promoted during the autumn term during SMILE Week. It was interesting to learn that staff view the cooperative values as being particularly important as they reflect the development and ethos of the Co operative Trust which has been formed with Ottery St Mary Primary School and has as its associate members Tipton St John and Feniton Primary Schools.

Nationally there is a movement to promote school federations, either through a formal federated arrangement or more informally through collaborative cooperation, which will hopefully drive improvement and the sharing of resources. West Hill Primary is reflecting this drive by joining Ottery St Mary Primary School in a Cooperative Trust and also more broadly through its participation in the Ottery Learning Community. During discussions with staff around their future aspirations and priorities for the school consistent themes emerged: the importance of looking externally at the wider community; understanding differences but sharing values; and ensuring that West Hill Community remains current with emerging thinking and practice. The adoption of a set of shared cooperative values does therefore fit well with and support this aspiration. West Hill has always been focused on supporting and being part of the community. The involvement of parents; listening to their views and comments, and engagement with other stakeholders is a strong aspect of the leadership at West Hill. What came through more strongly during this visit than previous assessments was a desire from all staff to look externally to good practice in other schools and also a developing confidence and commitment from everyone to work collaboratively with colleagues in other schools.

Staff do recognise that the next few years may well bring changes to the school leadership team. The move to both the Deputy Headteacher and Senior Teacher working part time has signalled to staff that change is on the horizon and is prompting people to think about the impact of that change. When considering the need to change the following things stood out as key considerations:

- **Communication:** the need for open and timely communication about the future aspirations and direction of the school;



Commercial in Confidence

- **Continuity:** in relation to values, standards and leadership characteristics;
- **Succession planning;** the need to consider possible scenarios as a team;
- **Responsibilities:** clearly defined roles and accountabilities throughout any period of change.

People have confidence in the leadership of the Headteacher and senior team and believe they demonstrate a leadership style that is driven by the values of the school. There is significant commonality in the terms people use to describe the characteristics of the leadership they experience at the school and it is these characteristics that people feel will be needed for West Hill to remain outstanding in the future.

People emphasised the following characteristics:



Interestingly these characteristics mirror the personal qualities outlined in the Headteacher Standards (2015). The standards emphasise vision, resilience, integrity, future focus and the ability to translate local and national policy into a school context.

It was really encouraging to note that staff view the new chairmanship of the Governing Body very positively. People feel that there is a renewed energy and fresh commitment from Governors which is focussed on maintaining the ethos and outstanding standards of West Hill. The Chair of Governors understands the priorities for the school and recognises the role the Governing Body plays in supporting the school through change and maintaining standards. I believe that Governors do demonstrate supportive leadership and through the work they are doing to review their own performance will increasingly develop to be joint decision makers and support the strategic vision of West Hill. The message came through strongly from Governors that they want to understand current performance and individual subject strengths, research external good practice and introduce a greater degree of supportive rigor and challenge. For example the greater involvement of Governors through meetings with subject leaders and participation in learning walks should put Governors in a better position to support the School. Governors also recognise that establishing a future focussed vision for West Hill that is supported by a concise and targeted



Commercial in Confidence

development plan is vital for planning and sustaining excellence and achieving the aspirations of the West Hill community.

Skills and resources

Responsibilities and roles are understood well across the School. Since my last visit in 2013 there have been changes for some staff in relation to year groups and subject leadership responsibilities. Although these changes were initially somewhat daunting people now feel that they have gained from a fresh approach, developed their skills and confidence, and ultimately have enjoyed the challenge.

There continues to be a strong focus on developing practice at West Hill. Staff learning and professional development is promoted and a learning culture that is aspirational, stretching and supportive is evident for both pupils and staff. Teachers confirmed that they are being encouraged to reflect on their own performance and identify ways in which they might improve learning and also strengthen and embed their lead subject across the school. Staff confirmed that helpful formal and informal discussions regularly take place about good practice and that the sharing of ideas is encouraged. This appears to be an area strengthened since last assessment visit. Staff meetings are clearly being used to discuss and develop practice and staff do seem to value these sessions. For example a recent session on the topic of feedback was praised by staff who all felt it to be very relevant and useful. It is also great to see that staff are being encouraged to spend time in other schools and bring good practice back to West Hill. I also understand that in 2015/16 the plan is for more peer observations and external visits to take place.

I feel that there is now a sharper focus on subject leadership and what this role involves and people definitely appear more confident in their role. People have been coached and supported in developing their subject leader role and autonomy and ownership has increased.

The focus placed on staff involvement and development leads to a culture where learning (for all) and achievement are valued, and people feel motivated to be outstanding. A good example to demonstrate staff involvement is the introduction of the new curriculum which staff feel was a whole school process. Great people-management practices remain a key strength at West Hill and I am sure these foundations will continue to support people in growth and change. Performance management processes continue for all staff and include regular review of pupil progress, achievement and target setting discussions with the Headteacher or senior teachers and observations of teaching. Learning walks have taken place involving Governors and leadership team focusing on topics such as behavior for learning.

'We are sharing information more at staff meetings.'

'We work closely together to discuss and make decisions.'

'I've got more confidence that what I'm asking people to do is right.'

In relation to involvement and leadership there was really positive feedback from Teaching Assistants. TA's at West Hill are clearly enjoying their role: they feel supported, valued and personally feel that they have an impact on learning. There is particular recognition that with such a high percentage of part time teaching staff it is often TA's that provide continuity for children which is felt to be especially important for reception and key stage 1 classes.



Commercial in Confidence

There was very positive feedback regarding the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school. There is absolute confidence in the Headteacher and senior team and people trust their judgements. This confidence comes from their obvious commitment and interest in the school, their knowledge, professionalism and a recognition that they actively seek to be 'ahead of the curve' in terms of the wider educational environment. Although the specific capabilities required of effective leaders have not been explicitly discussed or communicated there is a common understanding of the skills and behaviours all leaders at the School need to display.

Points for reflection

The feedback from those staff I interviewed was consistently positive and emphasised the pride and satisfaction people feel in contributing to the success of West Hill. There were in fact remarkably few concerns or areas where people feel improvement is required. A few areas for consideration and improvement have been suggested and it is hoped these will support you in your ongoing development of staff management and leadership strategies.

Engagement

- At an advanced level Investors in People encourages organisations to actively seek feedback from staff on how they are lead and managed and to improve processes as a result of this feedback. I would encourage you to develop a more structured approach to gathering staff feedback on people management processes such as performance management, induction and CPD generally.
- You currently issue a biannual questionnaire to staff which I understand is based on the Ofsted questionnaire. Could you develop this questionnaire to include reference to your values? Perhaps tailor it more for West Hill?
- TA meetings are valued and it would be great if they could take place more consistently. You might consider:
 - reviewing the frequency of the meetings;
 - ensuring they are scheduled in school calendar;
 - issuing an agenda prior to the meeting to encourage reflection and discussion;
 - Focussing on specific theme to encourage learning and sharing of practice.
- As a general point I would encourage you to consider how you capture and communicate your ethos and values. Many organisations summarise their vision and values in pictorial format as well as text which can give them greater impact and make them more memorable.
- Moving forward senior staff and Governors will need to consider how they can encourage staff to be involved in discussion around the schools long term vision and the development of the cooperative trust.



Commercial in Confidence

Performance management

- For support staff and particularly TA's there was support for the appraisal documentation and process to be reviewed and updated. I would encourage you to consider:
 - more structured observation of TA practice so that they receive structured feedback on their approach and ways of working with the children;
 - updating the appraisal paperwork to ensure it is relevant to the TA role and West Hill approach;
 - ensuring people have the opportunity to reflect and plan for their appraisal by issuing the appraisal documentation in good time (end of summer term);
 - ensuring people have access to a copy of their last appraisal documentation to help them reflect on achievements;
 - providing the opportunity for interim reviews of progress.
- It would be helpful to ensure that there is a clear timetable for observations and learning walks throughout the year. Also could you involve the team in identifying topics for learning walks over and above their subject lead areas?
- Learning Walks were described by staff as being less stressful than observations but people did comment that they do not receive the same detailed level of individual feedback. It is clearly important to ensure that there is a balance between individual observation (with people receiving direct and constructive feedback on their teaching) and more general reviews of practice such as learning walks and peer observations.

Leadership

- As part of their development I would encourage the Governing Body in their plans to look externally at good practice in leadership and governance. Part of the Governors development plan is to ensure that they are equipped to support the Headteacher and leadership team in succession planning and taking decisions regarding the future direction of West Hill and looking at other cooperatives and successful federations across Devon and southwest might help in identifying effective approaches. Governors could also start to consider and agree the skills and attitudes that ensure effective leadership at West Hill now and in the future. Developing plans for succession and having a clearly defined process for implementing these plans is also clearly a priority. It is important to understand the practical and required steps in the recruitment and selection process of senior staff and also how you will select for the values you require leaders to demonstrate. Work has been undertaken in the NHS and social care sector to develop value based interview practice which involves asking questions around values as well as competence questions and gaining an awareness of these and similar approaches might be helpful.
- As a leadership team both the Headteacher and Governors have a consistent and shared understanding of the skills required to deliver effective leadership at West Hill however at an advanced level IIP recommends that your requirements be explicitly communicated to all staff and that managers be regularly reviewed against these requirements. The suggestion would be to develop a leadership



Commercial in Confidence

framework which sets out your requirements and the support available to those staff wishing to develop their leadership capability. Such a framework might be based on current leadership standards in education or work done on leadership in other sectors.

- Having clear and measurable development plans is vital in relation to leadership and governance and enables robust monitoring to take place. I would encourage you to review and improve both the content and structure of your current Governor Development plan. As well as a conventional 'objective, action, impact' format you could also use the model in Appendix 2 to structure priorities.
- This assessment gave great evidence of Governor involvement within the school especially in regard to teaching and learning with Subject Leaders now having a linked Governor. It would be good to consider how this link can become more structured and consistent across subject areas. Clarifying expectations of Governors, developing a standard format for subject leader reports, developing a structure for the meeting and encouraging Subject Leaders to present their reports to the Governing Body in person could all be considered.



Commercial in Confidence

Maximising benefit from the Investors in People Process

Moving forward from this assessment it is important to agree how you wish to utilise the IIP Framework and accreditation process to ensure that it continues to support you in reviewing and improving practice. We also need to agree how you can achieve maximum benefit from the eighteen month interaction that is required to maintain accreditation.

The current IIP Standard is being reviewed and a new and updated IIP Framework will be available from September 2015. The refreshed framework continues to promote high performing people management practices, representing the very best of modern workplaces. Your next assessment in 2018 will be against this new framework and I believe it will fit well with your aspirations for leadership and excellence and support the values on which the West Hill community is based. To ensure you retain accreditation my recommendation is that we use the eighteen month visit to discuss the new IIP Framework and identify any additional areas for development required for ongoing Gold accreditation. It would also be great to involve Governors in this activity.

There will be nine constructs in the new framework against which organisations will need to provide evidence:

Revised IIP Framework	National Standards of Excellence for Head teachers
Leading and inspiring people	Domain 1: Qualities & Knowledge
Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Domain 1: Qualities & Knowledge
Empowering and involving people	Domain 2: Pupils & Staff
Managing performance	Domain 3: Systems & Processes
Rewarding and recognising high performance	Domain 2: Pupils & Staff
Structuring work	Domain 3: Systems & Processes
Building capability	Domain 2: Pupils & Staff
Delivering continuous improvement	Domain 4: Self Improving School System
Creating sustainable success	Domain 4: Self Improving School System

Organisations will be assessed as achieving each of these themes at a particular level – Developed, Established, Advanced or High Performing. I believe all of these themes will sit well with the vision and culture of West Hill and that you will readily be able to demonstrate Advanced or High Performing in a number of these themes. Inspiring leadership, succession planning, lived values and staff engagement, all of which are important to West Hill, are emphasised throughout the new framework. The themes of the revised IIP Standard also map well onto the National Standards of Excellence for Head teachers (2015) as shown above.



Commercial in Confidence

Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire

Both I and Investors in People South of England would welcome your feedback on this assessment and you will shortly be supplied with a Client Satisfaction Questionnaire from Investors in People to complete. Particular importance is placed on the feedback given by client organisations on Specialists; therefore we would very much appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaire.

Promoting continuous improvement

We support organisations at every stage of the Investors in People journey, helping them to realise the power of their people, optimise their performance and achieve their full potential. We see Investors in People as the People Partner for sustainable people solutions.

Please contact your Account Manager Veronica Parsons, on 07527 970404 or email veronica.parsons@iipsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk to find out more about Investors in People and how we can help your organisation.

Details of the support available to you can be accessed by contacting Investors in People South of England via: -

T: 020 7728 3456

E: enquiries@IIPsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk

W: <http://IIPsouth.investorsinpeople.co.uk>

Joanna Gillingham

Senior IIP Specialist



Commercial in Confidence

Appendix A

Outcomes table - evidence requirements framework matrix (please read in conjunction with IIP Framework)

Core Standard										
Total number of core evidence requirements assessed - 39										
Total number of core evidence requirements met - 39										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	
5	✓		✓						✓	
6	✓									
Wider Framework										
Total number of additional evidence requirements assessed - 157										
Total number of additional evidence requirements met -										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core	✓	Core	✓	✓	✓	Core	✓
5	Core	✓	Core	x	✓	NA	✓	✓	Core	✓
6	Core	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	x
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
9	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
10	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
11	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	✓	✓	✓		✓	NA	✓	✓	✓	x
15	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
16	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
17	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	x	✓		
18	✓		✓		✓	x	✓	✓		
19	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
20	✓		✓		x			x		
21	✓		✓		✓					
22	✓		✓		✓					
23	✓		✓		✓					
24	✓		✓		✓					
25	✓		✓		✓					
26			✓							
27			✓							
28			✓							
29			✓							



Commercial in Confidence

Appendix B

A model of Governance taken from the public sector which could be used to structure plans and aspirations for the Governing Body at West Hill.

Wording can be amended to be more relevant to education and your learning environment.

