

Why should trust schools work with higher education institutions?

1. Introduction
2. Sir Paul Edwards of Garforth Community college explains the benefits for the School Partnership Trust
3. Trusts involved in all – through education
4. Personal developments for trust staff
5. Fiveways trust and Hope University work together to offer additional support to PGCE undergraduates
6. Teacher research opportunities
7. Contact us for further information

Introduction

A trust school partnership can provide a unique opportunity to establish a formal framework that can unite a school, higher education institution, local businesses and community organisations in a strategic and sustainable collaboration.

Opportunities and benefits can include:

- Involvement of various organisations in local education across all phases and key stages
- facilitating a strategic approach to work related learning and personal skill development for students, parents/carers and the local community
- increased opportunities for teachers, tutors and students to engage with a larger group of organisations and individuals to undertake academic research
- enhanced contact between student placement providers and potential school employers
- greater attraction and pathways for pupils, parents/carers, the local community, to access higher education
- more opportunities to attract a variety of funding sources through joint applications

Many higher education institutions already work in partnership with schools in their local community. However, the unique nature of trust school partnerships means that they can now build a more visionary and collaborative partnership to create lifelong educational opportunities for all young people.

LJMU is currently working with four 'live' Trust Schools and supporting a further 11 schools who are working towards joining Trust Schools.

Sir Paul Edwards of Garforth Community College explains the key benefits for the School Partnership Trust:

The School Partnership Trust is a federation of five primary schools and one secondary school with three external partners including a higher education institution, Leeds NHS and the LSC. The trust was established in September 2007 as one of the first shared trusts in the country to build a sustainable and cost effective provision that has deepened and strengthened structural links across educational sectors.

The external partners have added energy, experience and enthusiasm, helping to drive up standards and deliver improved services for young people and their families. Within the current arrangement the Trust's higher education institution partner, Leeds Trinity & All Saints, contributes specifically to the delivery of foundation degree courses within the local area where historically only 13% of households had accessed higher education. Within the schools, they provide advice for learners at key transition points in the 13-19 age range and alternative pathways for students 16-19. They also offer guidance in developing student's maturity and ability as independent learners and general family, community and adult education.

All contribute directly to the Trust's principle objectives to strengthen collaboration, contribute to community cohesion and deliver improved children's services to create an environment in which students have access to a wide range of opportunities.

As a high attaining organisation the trust is already designated as a 'Pathfinder Academy Sponsor' and as such is the lead sponsor with two academies both set to open in September 2009 in Leeds and Doncaster. Leeds Trinity is supporting this expansion and will contribute with areas of governance and strategic planning, curriculum and learner support in each of the academy trusts.

Sir Paul Edwards, Garforth Community College

Trusts involved in all – through education

The University of the West of England (UWE) has invested in and valued its partnership with local schools.

The University was the first to sponsor an academy (The City Academy in Bristol) in 2002. It was involved in pathfinder trusts and is a founder partner in 'Trust in Learning' with the local authority. This trust has been acquired by the Bridge Learning Campus, which is an innovative all-through campus in South Bristol comprising of a primary school, secondary school, special school and further education vocational centre, and is one of a number of exciting new educational initiatives taking place in Bristol.

UWE is also part of a different trust acquired by Worle Community School and Westhaven Special School in North Somerset, where inclusion and 'learning to learn' are key drivers. Partnerships with specific schools in areas with low participation rates in higher education, enables us to play a more strategic and sustained part in the education landscape of a region - crucial for a university which recruits a significant percentage of its undergraduate students from the local area.

The University is already seeing a number of benefits from these partnerships including increased numbers of applicants applying for higher education (The City Academy has seen applications for Higher Education rise from 1 in 10 to 1 in 4 pupils since it opened). There have been other benefits

too... it has also had the nature of its partnerships praised in its Ofsted reports which have contributed to Grade 1s in all phases!

Professor Ron Ritchie, Assistant Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the School of Education of University of the West of England

Personal developments for trust staff

The Ashington Learning Partnership Trust has developed close links with its Trust Partner Northumbria University.

The Trust schools work with the University each year to train 25 post-graduate students as teachers as part of the School Based Initial Teacher Training Programme. Additionally the schools in the partnership host other ITT students for teaching practices.

A major recent development has been the creation of a bespoke Masters Degree for Trust staff. The degree is taught at the schools with the 18 participants on the course doing research projects which are classroom based and linked to the Trust Development Plan. In this way teachers get accreditation while contributing to the development of the Trust.

Ken Tonge, Strategic Headteacher of Ashington School

Fiveways trust and Hope University work together to offer additional support to PGCE undergraduates

The Fiveways Trust was established in April 2008 and comprises of Childwall Sports College, Liverpool Primary Care Trust (PCT), Liverpool John Moores University, Hope University and Broadgreen International School.

The link with Hope University is particularly strong through Childwall Sport College's appointment of Delyth Jones. Delyth was appointed to a Fast Track post having graduated from Liverpool University with a Physics Degree and subsequently completing her PGCE.

Since her appointment, Delyth has been working very closely with Hope University Science PGCE students running Physics enhancement sessions. These sessions are to prepare students to teach all three sciences up to GCSE level. The sessions involve going through prior knowledge, how to teach difficult concepts, trying out different experiments and dealing with misconceptions in Physics topics. 'A' Level sessions were carried out to allow the Physics specialists to become more confident teaching at Post-16 level.

The students are now in school placements full-time and Delyth will be visiting them on their placements in a tutor capacity, formally observing the lessons and relaying evaluation back to the university.

This has also opened up worldwide opportunities. As a result of working through the Fiveways Trust and Hope University, Delyth is now assisting teachers in schools in Northern India as part of a team run by the charity 'Hope University One World'. She will be involved in supporting science teachers with teaching and learning and producing resources.

The Fiveways Trust has produced some outstanding links with higher education providers and the example of Delyth working at Hope University is only one of many. This will certainly have benefits in

terms of her professional development but also for our Science faculty. Hopefully, it will ensure a steady stream of excellent graduates to work at the college in due course. I can only commend the work of the Fiveways Trust in this venture in the highest possible terms.

D.W. Phillips (Headteacher of Childwall Sports College)

Teacher research opportunities

One of the key aims of South Dartmoor Community College and its trust was to provide teacher research opportunities with Exeter University.

One of the research projects we have embarked on involve the Mathematic Department looking at the development of question techniques used by students. Through class-based research a variety of activities and questioning styles are being trialled. An aim is to move students from being 'passive' to 'active' learners and for an increase in engagement and enjoyment in the subject.

Another project includes our Science Department investigating post-sixteen choices, especially in relation to gender issues. The number of female students taking A Level Physics has dropped in the last 20 years from 50,000 to 20,000. The study will look at potential interventions that may have an impact on perceptions and understanding of the subject as well as students self esteem and knowledge in this area.

The collaboration with Professor Myhill and staff at the University in both projects has been invaluable. Their constructive support, 'critical eye' and ongoing accreditation is enabling the work to develop into meaningful research.

The results of these research projects are likely to be quite far-reaching, not just on the career development of those staff involved, but more importantly in raising the standards of education for the future generations of students in our care.

Mike Billington, Governor

Contact us for further information

The Trust and Foundation Schools Partnership (TFSP) can provide support to schools in developing and establishing links with universities. There are currently over 39 universities involved in supporting trust schools and many more partnerships planned. There is a range of resources available to support schools and universities exploring trust partnerships including the trust and foundation schools website, the trust partner e-network and regular trust partner events.

If you would like some advice or support on engaging university partners please contact Rebecca Ledger on 020 7802 0705 or Rebecca.ledger@ssatrust.org.uk