Improving transition in mathematics using an 'All-Through' approach to Teaching and Learning

Overview

The regional School Improvement Board, sub-regional School Improvement Board and local School Improvement Board had Maths as a priority.

Local primary and secondary schools were engaged in a year 6-7 transition project focusing on a seamless move by learners between schools and phases with cross-phase moderation to ensure pupil attainment was directly linked to year 6 learning. Schools were organised into transition clusters with secondary schools acting as 'transition hubs.' The maths transition project built on the above with a specific focus on extending the 'all through' approach from EYFS up to and including preparation for Level 2 study. The project aimed to support:

- Identification and application of best practice between phases
- Moderation of work between and across phases
- Cross-phase planning and joint practice development in Early Years, Primary and Secondary
- Support of numeracy development in Early Years by best practice in primary
- Secondary application of primary meta-cognitive approaches to learning maths
- Primary development of maths mastery using secondary subject knowledge
- Maths leadership development succession planning and talent management drives continuous improvements
- Literacy development KS2 and KS3

Good practice to share with others interested in running school improvement projects to ensure projects deliver the intended outcome.

- Undertake a detailed 'on the ground' assessment of need before the project starts.

- Recruit local talent to create capacity to deliver outcomes as they can provide valuable relational links between staff and organisations.

- Growing local talent provides you with precious capacity to sustain the project once completed.

- Maintained strong, clear and frequent communications with stakeholders throughout the project to ensure all are aligned to the project's outcomes – "do with not to do".

- Know when to pause and take stock – the EEF KS2 – KS3 transition

report came out in December 2017 after we had begun the project, we needed to ensure that the project's activity and direction was in step with the findings of the report.

- Ensure strong leadership at the top to ensure the project is driven and that Headteachers can be supported to engage.

- Work with organisations and engage in networks that can further your purpose or deliver outcomes, they will be extremely useful when planning the sustainability of the project.

- "Culture eats strategy for breakfast" – engaging hearts and minds is more powerful than just delivering the activities

- Be as transparent as possible and take opportunities to report on and promote the project to ensure a collective responsibility for the outcomes.

What the project may do differently in the future

- Look out for unforeseen threats to the progress of your project. Although the EEF KS2-3 Maths Transition report was extremely useful and framed a lot of the activity we did after its publication (greater project focus on manipulatives and Algebra training), its release meant the project had to pause and take stock of what the research evidence was saying about transition. Fortunately, the project was broadly in-line with the findings and helped to deepen our understanding of the issues, but if it had not we would have had to renegotiate our project's activities.

Sustainability measures taken by projects to ensure improvement are sustained beyond the funding period.

- A range of strategies have been put in place through the project that ensured cross-phase maths transition activity is sustainable and that momentum is maintained.

- It should also be recognised that the cultural shifts (as well as practice) within the schools has been down to the relationships built between system leaders and the staff / leaders / departments / schools with which they worked.

- The sustainability strategy has therefore ensured that key system leaders are 'woven' into the fabric of the legacy work to ensure a smooth transition to a multi-agency approach.

- Project Strategy Group and Delivery Team members are now linked into local school improvement networks as outlined –

    1. Senior SLE is now Local NCETM Maths Hub Lead for the local area

and also maths lead in a local MAT.

2. Maths SLE who co-designed algebra training is now a lead for new local NCETM Maths Hub.

3. NLE Lead for SSIF project has appointed Director of Maths for the lead academy trust to continue project legacy work.

4. HT from a local Primary School (recent Ofsted Outstanding) was on project Strategy Group is now providing maths best practice visits and maths training for local schools.

5. Project SLEs have been recruited by local NCETM maths hub for delivery duties and will receive further maths-specific system leader training.

6. SSIF Project Lead and NCETM / Maths Hub leads met for handover and planned legacy work including targeting project schools to enrol on ongoing Maths Hub training programmes.

7. Post – NPQML maths cohort leadership development has also been picked up by local NCETM maths hub. Maths Project SLE is also a member of a local NCETM Maths Hub Strategy Board.

8. School Family Groups continue to work on maths-related cross-phase activity through an established structure overseen by the local School Improvement Board.

9. This work is perpetuated by the new maths network set up through the project and the annual Local Authority KS2-3 transition week in July.

10. Maths CPD sessions to be provided by the lead MAT's twilight programme in conjunction with a coordinated School Improvement offer by two local Teaching Schools, a local Research School, a local English Hub, and a local MAT learning and development centre. This will include non-specialist maths training, A Level maths training, and support staff maths training.

11. The establishment of a secondary school, common, standardised maths assessment via GL assessment will provide greater pro-activity in the support and development of teachers through analysis of pupil outcomes both within schools and across the local area.

12. Local ITT providers have established relationships with school maths departments and have developed experienced mentors to support training. The project outcomes and lessons learned as well as sustainability strategies have been reported to and worked on with the local School Improvement Board, sub-regional School Improvement Board and the local Opportunity area.