



Federation News November 2019

**Incorporating the
Annual Report
2018 – 2019**

SLF Annual Report 2018-19
Newsletter November 2019

Directors and Institutions, 2018-19

Dr P Williams, Cartmel Priory School

(CHAIRPERSON: 2018-19)

Mrs A Semple, QEstudio School

(VICE-CHAIR: 2018-19)

Mr A Lund, Appleby Grammar School

Mr N Whittle, Dallam School

Mr P Blackburn, John Ruskin School

Mr K Nash, Kendal College

Mr P Hyman, Kirkbie Kendal School

Mr G Hartley, Kirkby Stephen Grammar School

Mr A Cunningham, the Lakes School

Mr C Clarke, Lunesdale Learning Trust (QES)

Miss C O'Neill, Queen Elizabeth School

Ms S Campbell, Settlebeck School

Ms K Fox, University of Cumbria

Members and Institutions, 2018-19

Mark Williams, Appleby Grammar School

Dorothy Lownds, Cartmel (CHAIRPERSON)

Alan Gerrard, Dallam School

John Murray, John Ruskin School

Naomi Brown, Kirkbie Kendal School

Barbara Dowson, Kirkby Stephen Grammar School

Bill Smith, The Lakes School

Ty Power, Queen Elizabeth School

Myles Ripley, Settlebeck

Introductory remarks from Mrs A Wilkinson

SLF Vice Chair 2018-19

It is a privilege to be Chair of the SLF this year (2019-20) having served as Vice-Chair in support of Paul Williams' leadership last year. It was an honour to thank Paul and wish him well in his retirement on behalf of the Federation and it has been lovely to meet Sarah Beestone who is now in post at Cartmel.

The SLF has withstood the turbulence of constant change in policy and direction over the years, remaining true to its core principles of collaboration in a climate of trust and openness together with a shared commitment to all the young people in the area. It is the nature of this collaboration, based on ethical school leadership and genuine regard for one another that has helped us not only to withstand so many of the pressures that are brought to bear on schools but actually to strive for constant improvement.

Nationally there is talk of a crisis in education. There are certainly challenges up and down the country: teacher recruitment and retention; curriculum

reforms that have led to a "forgotten third" thanks to an insistence on comparable outcomes; more rearranging of the vocational landscape; serial under-funding of education leading to curriculum cuts and increasing class sizes. Reports abound telling of increasing numbers of teachers under stress and a reluctance to take on school leadership as accountability and the very different structures in the system make headship an unappealing prospect for so many young teachers. The schools in our Federation are well led and optimistic in spite of these issues: a great deal of that aspiration and determination comes from the support and collaboration afforded school leaders by the Federation.

This is particularly stark for me when I meet with the consortia chairs from the other Cumbrian areas to try to tackle some of the challenges we are facing as a county. Cumbria is beset by its own particular problems that serve to compound the national issues at times: its SEND provision requires improvement; its response to poor attendance is out of kilter with the national picture; its coastal towns, remotely super-sparse rural areas, its areas of deprivation and geographical challenges are largely misunderstood by Whitehall and many schools struggle to recruit staff.

A speaker at our most recent Cumbria Secondary Heads conference exhorted us to look to one another for solutions to our problems, but this can only happen when leaders feel comfortable asking for support and being honest about areas we are working on. I left the conference feeling even more committed to making sure that the Federation continues to provide that safe space for school leaders and develops its capacity to challenge and support even more effectively in future. We are going to need it.

It is therefore very reassuring that we have dedicated and experienced colleagues who are helping us to maintain our collaboration and plan for the future. I am grateful to Miriam Bailey and Steve Houghton for their work in supporting and guiding us. Their warmth and dedication set the tone for our organisation and we thoroughly enjoy working with them. We are also supported by great colleagues in Ian Walker and Adrian Hall who bring expertise straight into our schools, challenging us without ever undermining us - a difficult but essential balancing act. Jane Henderson is a flexible and indefatigable colleague when it comes to teacher training and the development of our future

work-force: if we are going to have growth we need to pay a great deal of attention to this aspect of our collaboration.

It was a pleasure to work with William Bancroft and the team delivering on the NPQML course over the past 12 months. This is another essential aspect of our work as schools don't develop without high quality middle leadership. The cohort undertaking this training certainly gave us reason to be optimistic about the future. It was good to work with Gemma McMullen who joined the project in its latter stages to complete the project work with the participants.

Central to the SLF's support and challenge are the peer reviews, which William Bancroft did so much to develop during his time in office. He insisted that these should be taken seriously, with thorough preparation by school leadership teams, rigorous questioning of a school's self-evaluation and the involvement of governors. Most schools now see the review process as a central part of their evaluation and school improvement, using the autumn review as the impetus for governors' meetings that hold school leaders to account whilst making sure they have the support they need to achieve the planned improvements.

The review process informs the more formal programme of support we can give to schools, often through the deployment of Ian Walker and Adrian Hall with other creative solutions using the strengths we have within our schools. The sustained support over time afforded by this approach is far more likely to lead to meaningful changes in practice.

Ofsted inspections and monitoring visits invariably refer to the positive impact the SLF has had in affecting school improvement. Long may it continue.

This is a very important year for us as we consider the future direction of the SLF. A development group comprising newer colleagues is meeting regularly to consider the priorities for this new generation of school leaders. They are looking at what we can learn from MAT ways of working, how to engage with research, how we can build capacity ourselves, what our professional learning offer could look like and how we want to structure the leadership of the Federation over the next few years. There has never been a time in education when collaboration between schools was more

important and I for one am determined to do all I can to make sure that the Federation continues to thrive.

NPQML (National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders): Reports Steve Houghton

We have now completed delivery of Middle Leadership training for cohort 1 delegates with a second cohort under way and moving towards completion at Dallam School.

For cohort 1, at the time of writing, we are confident that 14 out of the 15 original delegates will hand in their school improvement project for final assessment. The one colleague not meeting this deadline has had ill health and has been absent from school for significant amounts of time.

Two of cohort 1 colleagues have moved to leadership positions external to our partnership but have kept in touch with programme accreditation requirements.

Module by module evaluations completed by participants indicate strong satisfaction levels with the course.

Our thanks to William Bancroft who has played a key role in coordinating the programme on our behalf and a big welcome back to Gemma McMullen (Kirkbie Kendal) who has taken on William's role in ensuring that delegates receive sufficient support to ensure the successful completion of the course.

A celebration event is planned for early Spring Term with delegates being asked to present a summary of their school improvement project to small groups of Heads from within our partnership. We're not sure that this was the kind of celebratory event that participants envisaged but it's all good professional practice.....

In future years we will continue to grow our leadership development programme to ensure a ready supply of future leaders.

School to School support / School Improvement: Reports Steve Houghton

In the last academic year our school to school support function was coordinated by William Bancroft and comprised of our now traditional round of autumn and spring reviews supplemented

by hands on support from a range of colleagues within our partnership but most prominently from Ian Walker (John Ruskin School: leadership & English) and Adrian Hall (QES: leadership & Maths).

You will recall that we have invested considerable resources to secure the services of both colleagues for the equivalent of one day per week each. An evaluation of the impact of their work was provided to Heads in the summer term to positive acclaim with the result that the services of both colleagues have again been secured for the current academic year.

In terms of school improvement the current academic year sees the launch of a new OFSTED framework providing a significant departure from previous models of evaluating the effectiveness of schools. In simple terms there is less emphasis on internal school data and much more of a focus on the quality of curriculum design and its role in securing equal access and progression for all groups of learners through the careful sequencing of knowledge delivered in such a way as to secure maximum engagement and learning.

In the current academic year so far two of our schools have received visits from HMI. In September Appleby Grammar School hosted a very positive HMI monitoring visit which praised the leadership of the school for putting into place appropriate strategies to improve further the quality of education. In addition there were some complimentary comments about the quality of external support (another positive value for money indicator for Adrian and Ian).

More recently John Ruskin School has been exposed to the delights of a “full blown” two day section 5 inspection under the new framework. At the time of writing the inspection report is yet to be published but suffice it to say that school leaders were pleased (if a little exhausted) by the outcome of the visit.

Within the new framework much more is expected of Heads of Department and classroom teachers in relation to questions about curriculum design and its practical implementation within their curriculum areas.

Clearly the shift in OFSTED focus has implications for how we conduct our reviews but never being ones to “let the grass grow” we are already in the process of making the necessary adjustments which will take full effect next year.

In several of our schools we’ve already taken opportunities to visit classrooms with members of the governing body and have been delighted to meet with them to discuss progress against school improvement priorities. As a partnership we always welcome the opportunity to engage with governors.

Curriculum & PD Group: Reports Steve Houghton

As a follow up to John Tarbox’s, (Headteacher at Bowland High School) visit to our area to discuss school improvement, a group of Headteachers & Senior Leaders from our partnership attended Bowland High School in Lancashire for the day. The visit included conversations with senior and middle leaders, visits to classrooms as well as discussions with students. We are delighted to make this link and have offered a reciprocal visit to our partnership.

In addition, we took the opportunity to visit Key Stage 2 classes at St Marys Primary School, Kirkby Lonsdale to look at medium and long-term plans in a primary context and on the same day toured some of the vocational learning areas in the QESchool.

The group has also started to explore the curriculum implications behind the quality of education judgement in the new OfSTED framework and this will remain a focus of our work in the academic year 2019—20.

Governor Training: Reports Miriam Bailey

In May 2019, Phil Houghton of QES led a second session (a follow-on from the previous year) on how to interpret the IDSR with many useful reminders on how to interpret and question data they are presented with.

This was followed by a presentation by Alison Wilkinson, Principal of the Queen Elizabeth Studio School, on the research and rationale behind the latest Ofsted framework which came into operation in September 2019.

OfSTED Updates: Reports Miriam Bailey

Two of our schools were inspected during 2018-19 with the following outcomes:

- Kirkbie Kendal: Good (December 2018)
- The Lakes School: Requires Improvement (December 2018)

A new OfSTED framework has been implemented from September 2019. There is less focus on data, outcomes and compliance curricula than previously.

There is now a particular emphasis on the sequence of learning and how it aids memory. There is also 'deep dive' scrutiny into individual subject areas which involves inspections of schemes of work, student books, interviews with staff and students.

Subject Networks: Reports Miriam Bailey

There has been a change in the calendar, just for this year. Where we would usually have our cross-partnership training day on the last Friday of the half term in October, we have had a series of network group meetings in the same manner as the spring and summer terms.

This was decided in light of staffing changes and the lack of time to organise such a large event. In place of the partnership-wide training day, schools were offered the opportunity to hold their own in-house training days which could be used to address the changes in the Ofsted framework.

Twelve of the fourteen groups met before half term, with two more scheduled to meet after the mid-term break. Jane Henderson, Ian Walker, Adrian Hall, Steve Houghton and I have supported and attended the majority of the meetings.

The quality of discussions, the mutual support and the opportunity to share good practice and learn from each other is evident in all groups. We are extremely grateful to subject leads for giving time to facilitate these cross-partnership meetings, all of whom already have a demanding work load within their home schools.

Discussions are now taking place in the headteachers' development group as to what the cross-federation training day will look like next October.

Inclusion Advocates: Reports Miriam Bailey

The Inclusion Advocates group is comprised mainly of deputy and assistant head teachers, school based education welfare staff (most of whom are the designated safeguarding lead in their home schools), representatives from Cumbria LA and our local Pupil Referral Unit in Barrow. Inclusion

Advocates meet at least once a half term, usually monthly.

The main purpose of the group is to:

1. Agree school places for 'hard to place' pupils such as the permanently excluded or those who have been out of education for some time.
2. Consider applications from schools for a student placement at the Pupil Referral Unit, (PRU), in Barrow.
3. Consider strategies for managing those at risk of exclusion.
4. Agree managed moves of students at risk of permanent exclusion between the Federation schools.
5. Disseminate best practice in inclusion.

This group plays an active role in ensuring that young people can access their educational entitlement.

Staff from the PRU continue to offer a six week Outdoor Education course as alternative provision. This has taken place on one day per week and a small group (maximum 6) of young people have been led through a range of outdoor education activities. Initially it was targeted at KS4 students, but curriculum time and exam pressures have meant that the offer has been broadened to KS3. Those who have participated have clearly derived enjoyment and success from the programme; the idea is that if young people are given the opportunity to engage and enjoy something, they will be able to 'take this with them' into the school setting.

Most reports about students' engagement and attitude in school have been positive. The SLF are grateful to the PRU for providing this facility and have worked with Inclusion Advocates to ensure its success.

The Art group continued with anything between two and four students attending throughout the year.

The original purpose of the PRU was to offer short-term early intervention for those students who were not doing well in their schools. Unfortunately, mainly due to curriculum pressures and lack of funding, the vast majority of young people who attend the PRU now are those who have been permanently excluded.

In the last academic year (2018-19), ten young people (of which three were reintegrated from the PRU) from both the local area and outside the county, were accommodated in South Lakes schools through the Fair Access Protocol.

Four young people had a successful supported transition from one local school to another through a managed move.

The previous arrangement has been that the SLF has had an allocation of 9 full-time equivalent places at the PRU which would be used by a combination of dual-registered and permanently excluded students. As we are now in a situation where all students who attend the PRU are PEX students it has been agreed that when PRU staff can identify an opportunity for a possible dual-registered student they will share this with IAs who can then make a decision as to who they might allocate that place.

Children's Services has been looking for some time to establish an appropriate 'alternative provision' and have been considering various options. There is now going to be a new build on Walney Island (Combe House) which has an ambitious timetable to open September 2020 and the PRU leadership are busy recruiting and preparing for this.

The location of alternative provision on Walney is not an ideal location for South Lakes children, so Inclusion Advocates are looking forward to information which is to be shared about the alternative provision which is being developed at Dallam School – currently for Dallam School students only. This would be a much more realistically accessible provision for our schools.

**Pastoral and Safeguarding Group:
Reports Miriam Bailey**

This group meets regularly after the Inclusion Advocates' meeting. The purpose of the group is to disseminate best practice and strategic planning in the SLF relating to pastoral support.

Schools carry a range of responsibilities regarding child protection and pastoral issues which include the Prevent agenda, child sexual exploitation and a vast range of safeguarding matters. This group provides an opportunity to share feedback from courses and conferences, new and developing information that schools must be aware of and ready to action as well as good practice. Every

opportunity is taken to invite colleagues from other agencies to share their knowledge and experience with the group.

Children's Services now holds a 'Keeping Children Safe in Education Partnership' meeting on a half termly basis which I attend on behalf of our consortium. This has proved, so far, to be a useful means of gaining and disseminating information to colleagues. As part of this information sharing, Steph Mulhall from the Safeguarding Hub also visits the group to share any information she has and takes feedback and questions from colleagues.

Steph is also keen for colleagues to attend a workshop at the Hub so that school colleagues can meet Hub staff and gain an insight into practice and procedures for safeguarding. Dates have been offered to colleagues for the spring term.

Other items discussed have been the Keeping Children Safe in Education agenda; permanent exclusions as a last resort and concerns about the increase; supervision safety plans for children at risk of suicide; the Children and Young People's Well-being Plan consultation; information from the Safeguarding Hub; safeguarding training; review of policies and protocols; raising awareness of possible training opportunities for colleagues.

This is a strong group who offer a great deal of mutual support and are an outstanding example of SLF collaboration; it is a privilege to work with them.

**Initial Teacher Education (ITE):
Reports Jane Henderson**

2018-19 has been an interesting period of consolidation for ITE in the SLF as Dallam Teaching Alliance (DTA) will once again offer the opportunity to reintroduce School Direct trainees into our SLF schools.

Whilst we continue to work closely with the University of Cumbria core PGCE trainees and other providers across our local TS alliances, SLF Schools are looking towards the future and will be supporting DTA with interest.

The DTA aims to use staff in the SLF to enhance essential training opportunities and, supported by SLRP and Kendal College, trainees will complete a cross-phase learning journey of children from 2 years old to 18.

Many of our lead staff will provide high quality workshops, enabling trainees to access the latest

insights into effective teaching and learning and provide training and guidance in principled-teaching and leadership. This is consistent with the strong co-operative values being upheld within the DTA and all SLF school.

Being able to take part in School Direct delivery again will be the goal for so many. Being committed to wanting to train the type of teachers the SLF want to employ is so important to us.

We are aware that future developments will need to support these in-school training opportunities and hope that in the next academic year we can extend these skills once again to prospective teachers new to our profession.

Ofsted for ITE is also changing and being part of the Stakeholders group during 2018-19 has enabled us to be fully aware of change and how to prepare for this.

Several Mentors are now working towards presenting portfolio submissions for the QMS (Qualified Mentor Status) and QLMS (Qualified Lead Mentor Status) awards and the SLF remains part of the membership of the moderation panel for the Award itself.

SLF staff value and support trainees at all stages as expert practitioners and outstanding mentors. We encourage all of our professional and subject mentors to promote this opportunity as a Professional Award in SLF schools in the future and are encouraging others to submit similar portfolios in the light of future developments in ITE.

Provision for Newly Qualified & Recently Qualified Teachers (NQT/RQT): Reports Jane Henderson

13 of the 2018-19 cohort of 14 NQTs registered with us as an appropriate body became successful members of the teaching profession.

Once again in November, we held a Conference event designed to support the NQTs' school induction. Lead staff from primary and secondary schools from SLRP and the SLF used a cross-phase delivery to work with our newest recruits to SLF schools. The SLF induction and support programme remains one of the most useful professional development tools for new staff in our schools and, with the introduction of an extended period of induction with the DfE's Early Years Framework, this

will soon extend the induction to a period of two years.

Working to prepare for these developments, we will be offering an additional Conference for all our RQTs in November this coming year. By extending their target setting into the next year after completing their induction, RQTs have determined the content of this Conference for themselves and we have offered them the opportunity to share strategies for managing workload balance and sharing ideas to help with increasing demands; the chance to review Assessment for Learning strategies and reviewing how memory is so important as the key to understanding how students learn as part of the Conference delivery.

In September 2019, we signed up 17 NQTs.

By providing a formal structure ensuring that the support needed is available for all during their school induction, we visit our NQTs during the induction period and are aware that sometimes the induction may need to be extended. This would enable the NQT to have the support they need to enable them to be equipped to manage the increasing demands being made on new teachers.

Our priority is to work together to meet the challenges of teacher retention and bring together expertise from established teachers aiming to improve and share their classroom teaching skills and quality experiences for all our NQTs and RQTs. Our regular professional mentor meetings do much to assure the QA of all our induction and support given to those new to the profession.

Concluding remarks from Miriam Bailey

From September 2019 until August 2020 SLF staffing is as follows:

Executive Officer: (1.5 days) Miriam Bailey.

- Facilitation of Board and Executive
- Calendar
- Inclusion officer
- Network groups
- Co-lead of the CPD group
- Link with Barrow PRU serving on the Management Committee

Training Officer: (ad hoc) Jane Henderson.

- Lead on our links with Initial Teacher Training providers such as the University of Cumbria.
- Lead on NQT assessment through The Teaching School.
- Lead on Special Educational Needs, PHSE and Careers groups
- Support for a range of network groups

**Director of Quality/Development: Steve Houghton
(1 day funded from the Teaching School)**

- Lead on school improvement
- Delivering bids for extra funding
- Co-lead on PD group
- Lead of curriculum group
- Trio lead for QE Studio, The Lakes School, Appleby and Dallam

Finance Officer: (2 days) Sarah Platt

- Accounts and finance
- A range of other important administrative roles eg the website; support for other officers

**English / Teaching and Learning: Ian Walker
(1 day secondment)**

- Support across a range of schools
- Support for English network group

**Maths / Teaching and Learning: Adrian Hall
(1 day SLF; 2 days Maths Hub; 1 day AMSP)**

- Support across a range of schools
- Support for maths network group

The future

The headteachers' Development Group continue discussing what the SLF's needs and strategy will be moving forward and how these can best be provided for within funding limits.

