

Investors in People Platinum Level

Executive Summary

Gosberton House Academy (GHA) have been an Investors in People organisation since 2005 and sought re-assessment against the Investors in People standard in May 2017, after having achieved Gold accreditation (IIP5) in 2014. They have used the IIP framework as a key part of their 'developing people' strategy aimed specifically at supporting their ambition to be renowned as an expert in Autism Education i.e. The Centre of Excellence. It is always a pleasure and honour to spend time at and with staff at GHA. Their passion for, dedication to and success with, the children is outstanding. The OA results and the onsite feedback at GHA were extremely strong and positive across all aspects of the Standard. Although GHA have always (in my experience), been committed to best practice (as evidenced by their progression over the years from Core to Gold Investors in People accreditation), it seems that the significant shift in culture, structure, processes, results, growth and positive outcomes is a direct result of consistent, determined and inclusive approaches to leadership and values. The willingness of the Principal to embrace new approaches (as a result of self-reflection, feedback, a willingness to try and learn from mistakes and her passion for GHA to be the best possible learning environment for the children) has in itself, role modelled best practice. Changes to the leadership team has created a stronger, united team in which members are recognised and appreciated for their strengths and passions. Again, setting role model behaviour for staff which people describe as both 'inspirational and motivational'. Values are the back bone of GHA, driven by the Working Together, Learning Together ethos and supplemented by their commitment to being a Rights Respecting School, the use of Emotional Literacy and the explicit, internally agreed parameters of 'Carefrontation'. People understand and consistently behave in line with these values. Underpinned by the Distributive leadership philosophy, people are proactively involved in decisions. Participation, collaboration and team working are fundamental (both to the success of the children and staff). Evident across the Academy in meetings and in how people informally communicate with each other. Everyone was passionate about delivering excellent outcomes for the children and as such, encouraged each other to use and take initiative. The impressive record of progression and devolvement of leadership responsibility across all staff, with a host of 'champions', driving change and improvement across a wide range of areas in which they are passionate, is testimony to its success. Although Performance management has been embedded at GHA for some time, the introduction of BlueSky (Education) has transformed this process into a 'real time two-way conversation' which puts objectives, achievement, progress, development, learning, constructive feedback and recognition on the day to day agenda and further promotes and facilitates openness and transparency (beyond anticipated expectations). The personal commitment from the Principal to use it effectively is, once again, role model behaviour. The outcome is an even stronger culture of appreciation, which encourages people to stretch themselves to be the best

they can be in the interests of the children. Although many organisations in general and Schools/Academies in particular, struggle with Reward and Recognition, it is significant that GHA does not. Initially, at the whole staff Generation 6 workshop and the subsequent context meeting, GHA felt this was their weakest area. However, the involvement of all staff in critically reviewing whether, how effectively and ways to improve Reward and Recognition has created an awareness and understanding of the myriad approaches appropriately used and available in GHA. As a result, the OA outcomes and interview feedback were far more positive than expected. Page 5 I © Investors in People Changes over the last 3 years to the structure of the GHA, not least due to Academy status and new internal appointments within SLT have brought both challenges (e.g. financial management) and benefits (e.g. more accessibility and speedier responses to staff). Engagement in the Mobilise project has delivered substantial benefits in terms of confidence and commitment of TA's to take ownership of and lead projects, and created effective mechanisms for TA's to proactively suggest ideas for change and improvement. People could cite a host of improvements, large and small, as a result. Policies and practices (including Induction of new starters) are constantly under review (on a termly basis by everyone) to enable staff to deal quickly and effectively with a range of issues and situations that might arise. Commitment to building capability has always been strong at GHA but has stepped up another several gears with the introduction of BlueSky. The most notable changes and impact are, the increased enthusiasm to research, share findings and ideas, access resources and manage i.e. take ownership and responsibility to drive personal development by each member of the team. This is fuelled by the immediate response, comments, approval, suggestions and recognition reciprocated by the Principal and others, as they access and observe each others' activity. A real promoter of collaboration and shared, continuous learning. Recruitment and selection continues to be effectively managed and resourced, underpinned by a strong philosophy of internal promotion to take full advantage of the efforts made to build capacity and capability within the team. BlueSky and other data supports the impact development has had on progression. Continuous improvement, as a result of internal and external accreditations and audits, plays a fundamental part in driving sustainable success. GHA can boast a host of accreditations and Quality Marks (QM) e.g. QM for Primary Schools for the 6th time, Investors in People since 2005, newly achieved CPD QM and National Autism Society (NAS) to name just a few. People are actively engaged in and passionate about, finding innovative ways to 'be even better than last year'. The Working Together Learning Together ethos works effectively and supportively to enable people to take risks and experiment with new ways of working with the children. Discovery of new approaches, resources, methodologies that work, are cascaded to everyone. The inclusive approach to leading and managing change is a key feature in contributing to GHA sustainable success. There are no secrets at GHA, people are included in discussing the pros and cons of possible change and actively involved in long and short term planning from weekly planning to School Improvement Planning. The desire to leave a legacy and a

strong, positive footprint in the field of Autism Education (primarily to have a positive impact on as many autistic children and their families as possible, dispelling the myths, building understanding and maximising support) is massive. As a result, everyone proactively seeks to engage with the community, both locally and across the County (and beyond!). Everyone (including Governors) was proud of the outcomes they achieve within the Academy, through the outreach success of Working Together Team as well as hosting the many external visitors who seek to observe best practice