

# Wokingham Borough Education Partnership Conference

26<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Post-it notes reflections**

# ‘Roses’ – something beautiful

- ▶ The power of vision and values and climate
- ▶ The universal approach - proportionate universalism

## Coaching:

- ▶ Coaching circles on a Monday morning - how it changes how staff and students feel
- ▶ Time for meaningful connection throughout the week
- ▶ Coaching and how this empowers every member of staff, gives every child a trusted adult and puts relationships and connections first
- ▶ Opportunity for all children to interact, listen and be heard
- ▶ Coaching - meaning relationships are formed and children and families feel safe, belonging and listened to
- ▶ Staff circles

### **Staff/ student interactions:**

- ▶ Interactions across the school and their impact on children feeling valued
- ▶ All staff having a shared understanding - a shared way of supporting young people
- ▶ Staff feeling empowered to choose the best response
- ▶ Members of staff feeling valued so that they are able to have impact on students

### **Pupil voice:**

- ▶ Hearing the children reflecting on the difference coaching makes
- ▶ Hearing from the students at Foundry College about how the College staff / culture ensures they 'belong'

### **Relationships / wellbeing:**

- ▶ Relationships are key and people feeling valued
- ▶ Focussing on how people feel
- ▶ Focussing on wellbeing before anything else
- ▶ Children being at peace with themselves
- ▶ The sense of connection that pupils and staff at Carr Manor feel that positively impacts their lives

- ▶ Operate in 'the grey' - humane, nuance, complexity
  - ▶ Students - 'Passengers versus crew'
  - ▶ The focus on life beyond school
  - ▶ No exclusions for over 20 years
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- ▶ Moving - very high expectations for the 1st 20%
  - ▶ Focus on reading
  - ▶ Reading buddies in school - an opportunity for all children to interact, listen and be heard
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- ▶ Recognising and celebrating 'reaching the bar'

# ‘Buds’ - an idea with potential for your setting

- ▶ Starting with values first and being led by these
- ▶ Vision - Resources - Frameworks

## Use of staff:

- ▶ Use of whole staff in creating strong relationships
- ▶ Involving more school staff in our pastoral care provision

## Adaptive interactions:

- ▶ Possibility of adaptive interactions
- ▶ Better understanding of young people's lived experience to enable appropriate reaction in the moment, and support

## Peace:

- ▶ Staff able to enable each child to have a sense of peace even in the most challenging of times

### **Existing good practice to build on:**

- ▶ All our staff know our children
- ▶ Relationship building. Take some things we do further (kindness)
- ▶ Continue to follow the drive for every child to aspire to become elite in my setting - to follow their dream peacefully
- ▶ Opportunities to link this work to the work we have already done on ordinarily available provision

### **Strategic approach - belonging:**

- ▶ Developing key principles for belonging, leading to concept of peace for all in school.
- ▶ Bringing our disadvantage strategy together with our belonging strategy
- ▶ A cohesive and consistent approach to developing a deeper sense of belonging

### **Pupil/ staff voice:**

- ▶ Do all of our pupils and staff feel like they belong to our school family? How do we know? How will we find out?

## Coaching:

- ▶ Putting pupils into coaching groups so that they have a trusted adult to check in with and who is an advocate for them
- ▶ Coaching groups in some form. We are not currently at the stage to do it to that level but could still timetable time to create those bonds, even just as a class.
- ▶ Regular coaching sessions for small pastoral groups.
- ▶ The idea of coaching for all - develop our culture further/ evolve around universal actions/ interactions for all - adaptive teaching/ adaptive relationships.
- ▶ Create an approach/ structure to meet with the most vulnerable pupils each week
- ▶ Lots of children come in dysregulated or unready to learn. Check-in coaching could support this.
- ▶ Develop our PP champions into groups
- ▶ Develop class assemblies into foundations of coaching circles
- ▶ Thinking about trusted adults in a different way, creating opportunities for children and families to feel more supported
- ▶ Staff circles in briefings

## Internal AP:

- ▶ Internal AP - how effective this can be - owned and delivered by the school
  - ▶ What AP possibilities across local schools could be created and shared in terms of costs/ staffing?
  - ▶ Using AP carefully to bridge the gap and support reintegration, inclusion and belonging
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- ▶ Punitive changing to 'positive' - we are too punitive
  - ▶ Focus on individual outcomes instead of school outcomes
  - ▶ Developing enrichment - fitting it to children's needs
  - ▶ Introduce recognition for expected behaviour ie making a contribution in the lesson



# 'Thorns' - challenges

Exclusive values - including parents

## Questions posed:

- ▶ How do we incorporate these principles into practice in each school's unique context?
- ▶ How do you ensure consistency across staff in 'in the moment' interactions?

## Logistics of organising coaching:

- ▶ What happens to the pupils during coaching when staff are absent/ called to urgent issues?
- ▶ Practicalities of arranging coaching/ staff training/ having consistent staff for all sessions/ how to choose the groups/ Coaching all staff to value working in this approach
- ▶ Timetabling for coaching, what do we let go?

## Costs:

- ▶ Budget/resource capacity

### **Staff buy-in:**

- ▶ Some staff struggle to see need to adapt/flex practice/approach.
- ▶ Staff open mindedness and flexibility to what will be a significant change in thinking
- ▶ Shift (radical!) in terms of expectations of staff in responding to behaviour
- ▶ Fixed mindset

### **Scale of the change:**

- ▶ Does this approach conflict with policies/ approaches that are embedded in schools/ trusts?
- ▶ Setting up the structures/ systems and use of staff - quite radical

## Capacity:

- ▶ Resource allocation - competing priorities and pre-existing plans
- ▶ Training need for staff versus other training priorities
- ▶ Complexity - some staff want a manual / do all staff have that capacity?
- ▶ As a new headteacher - managing the model for change alongside other pressures and priorities
- ▶ Level of depth of the work feels unachievable but CAN replicate and amend elements for my school
- ▶ Expertise/ knowledge to deliver high quality adaptive interactions

## Awareness of need to make change sustainably

- ▶ Not doing too much too soon and ensuring changes are made thoughtfully and sustainably
- ▶ System change takes time and commitment - ensuring we do it properly and don't just pay lip service to it

Next steps....

# For you...

## **Pupil voice:**

- ▶ Canvas children's views about belonging, rewards and the experiences they have in school
- ▶ Hear from children what belonging means to them
- ▶ Obtain more pupil voice, particularly for the disaffected

## **Thinking and discussion:**

- ▶ SLT discussion about ways we can promote belonging in school
- ▶ Take key inspirations to the rest of SLT - what do we need to adapt or think about?
- ▶ Follow (stick to) my hopes and dreams (dream even bigger maybe!) despite the hurdles that keep getting in the way

## Specific things to consider:

- ▶ Consider how we can **use circles** to establish and develop belonging and CPD opportunities
- ▶ Look at **relationships** with our most challenging children
- ▶ Consider how to bring relationships to the forefront again
- ▶ Think about improvement in **social and emotional readiness** for pupils so that they can not only thrive in school but in later life as adults
- ▶ Reflect on the **use of AP and behaviour systems** - do these isolate our most vulnerable?

# For your organisation

- ▶ Work on **social and emotional development** so that ALL pupils are able to thrive, not just at school but also in later life
- ▶ Continue to work on **pedagogical approaches** so that all are able to access curriculum
- ▶ Dial up **pupil voice**
- ▶ Find out what **sense of belonging** exists amongst pupils, parents and staff
- ▶ Look into opportunities for **cross-school collaboration for AP**
- ▶ **Adaptive interactions**
- ▶ Children finding **peace**; staff finding peace

## Belonging:

- ▶ Share importance of belonging - evident in all that we do
- ▶ Take belonging as a priority into all interactions with the Trust
- ▶ Understand the culture of belonging in each school in our Trust
- ▶ Review transitions and support pupils gaining a greater sense of belonging at a faster rate
- ▶ Add a 'belonging' objective to PP strategy
- ▶ Look at our offer for individual students - particularly for the 'froth' pupils - how can we adapt for them?
- ▶ Look at how we can improve the bespoke curriculums for our complex SEND pupils so they feel happier at school



## Coaching:

- ▶ Develop a full plan to consider the coaching model in school - at the very least to ensure that ALL staff impact the belonging vision in a first-hand way
- ▶ Student coaching circles for target groups - regular late to school students
- ▶ Friday circle meeting
  
- ▶ Develop frameworks that will move us from our vision to the outcome wanted
- ▶ Develop staff knowledge and understanding of cognitive load theory
- ▶ Develop a whole school understanding of our very young children developing their sense of agency

# For us as a partnership?

## Sharing practice:

- ▶ Wider sharing of what is working well for each school
- ▶ How can we effectively share best practice and engage with ALL schools and trusts - through the document (with case studies); through regular briefings/ CPD
- ▶ Gather case studies to show good practice
- ▶ Organise more opportunities for schools to share effective/ successful practice / case studies
- ▶ Sharing of best practice across 'belonging' domains (what are these?).

### **Carr Manor link:**

- ▶ More opportunities to work with Carr Manor School - detail around the systems, structure and rationale
- ▶ Involvement with Carr Manor School
- ▶ How does the Carr Manor approach specifically work for the primary and EYs sectors?

### **Proposed working group document:**

- ▶ Document is an interesting idea and could be useful but a lot of the suggested headings already appear in the OAP document. We can't always separate vulnerabilities and many children will have multiple vulnerabilities, some of which we won't know about. More important to deal with the need in front of us rather than the label.
- ▶ Connection first: being careful to be explicit that we don't always know what a child's vulnerabilities are; consider overlap with existing OAP document; embracing complexity - cannot always fit children neatly into boxes.

## Strategic approach:

- ▶ Consider buy-in from ALL schools in the belonging vision - a concern that not all children will benefit from this work
- ▶ Co-construct a belonging strategy
- ▶ Agree and roll out what we will be doing
- ▶ What is the overall view of education in Wokingham: Where are we? What do we want? How is the partnership looking NOT just at data but schools, staff, children finding peace

- ▶ Increased importance given to transitions, and supporting pupils who feel they don't belong and are EBSA
- ▶ Develop MAIC to ensure support for ALL students who are struggling
- ▶ Database of in-school AP currently and planned for the future. Develop this into borough cross-school provision.
- ▶ Parents don't feel they belong to society (a small minority) - How can this be addressed?
- ▶ Housing - the impact this has on education
- ▶ Specialists (outreach) to train/share practice
- ▶ Fairer admissions system - enabling PP pupils to access the school communities that suit their sense of belonging