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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Kidbrooke School

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On behalf of Capital Quality Limited

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■ Introduction

This was an Assessment against the Investors in People Standard incorporating 6 additional evidence requirements related to Core Values. The school is an inner city comprehensive, with Specialist Arts College status. The school is located on a single site and has a staff of 223 including 11 governors. The selection of 31 people represented all areas of the school when circumstances dictated that a member of staff could not make the interview, a suitable replacement was organised.

The Assessor would like to express his appreciation for the warm welcome he received by the Head Teacher and all her staff. Particular thanks go to Steve Courtney for his invaluable assistance in the preparation and execution of the Assessment.

■ Executive Summary

It is the opinion of the Assessor that Kidbrooke School fully meets the Investors in People Standard.

The school operates a reasonably comprehensive mentoring programme that was highly valued by those members of staff that have received it.

It was clear from the feedback during interview, that the school culture actively encourages risk taking, experimentation and creativity in the learning environment. This allows for significant cross curricular activities to take place. Mixing science and art in a coordinated approach not only creates stimulation amongst the students, but allows for inter-departmental cooperation and skills sharing amongst the staff.

All the staff are very proud of what has been achieved at Kidbrooke School and how the culture of equality and the principle of 'valuing every student' has produced a high level of harmony in a very culturally and educationally diverse community.

■ Additional Evidence Requirements (1.7, 1.10, 1.12, 1.16, 1.19, 1.22)

The Head Teacher (Trisha Jaffe) was very interested to discover to what extent the core values and social responsibilities, held dear to her and senior leaders within the organisation, are understood, adopted and manifested throughout the school.

To quote directly from the Kidbrooke School website: *"At Kidbrooke we are building a learning community where diversity, equality and respect matter. We want everyone to be healthy, safe and valued."*

Interviewees were able to give clear nuanced interpretations of the School's core values and could describe how these values were interpreted in the day to day operations of the school. They were also clear that these values were firmly held by senior management. Each interviewee (at Top Manager, Manager and People level), could describe how these values were translated into actions in their personal situation.

"We believe in equity. We put our money where our mouth is. Students are at the centre of what we do."

"We value ethnic diversity and every child."

"...this (equality) doesn't mean that we treat all kids the same. It's about treating them with equal worth and value, but responding to their needs in a unique way."

"It's not always about grades, it's about the community. As tutors we care about our kids"

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“Exclusion of a child is a last resort for us. This is how our value of inclusion is translated into action.”

People reported that their treatment of children with challenging behaviour was a key difference between Kidbrooke and other schools. Initially, the school will not refuse admission to a child just because they have been excluded from other schools, or have no English. From here, the school’s core values of inclusion and equality of value, combine with their Social Responsibility ethic to give the child the care required. It has been said that these values are not ‘free’ and that the reluctance to let a child go can be at the cost of some significant disruption to other students. However, from feedback from the interviewees, it is apparent that these costs are understood and that they will be carefully weighed when deciding upon eventual exclusion.

■ Further Evidence Requirements

During the course of the Assessment, the Assessor was able to confirm further evidence requirements were met. These are identified here:

Evidence requirements **1.11**, **1.17**, and **1.23** relate to the **Core Values being at the heart of the school’s strategy and govern the way it operates.**

An excellent example of the School incorporating their values into the heart of what they do can be found in the ‘Student Panel’. This panel demonstrates the Schools inclusive policy and gives the students a voice in the running of the school. This operates even to the extent of expressing their opinion on potential new recruits. The core values are so strong that the school requires a certain style of person. Student panel have been known to judge an applicant as ‘Not a Kidbrooke person.’

Current employees express the fact that culture of harmony and respect is part of the schools DNA: “We respect each other in this school and the kids see it. We act as role models and this sets what is acceptable behaviour for everyone.”

“We have had people here who had a bit of an edge to them. But they soon learn that it doesn’t work with us and they soon fit into our style.”

Evidence requirements **1.8**, **1.14**, and **1.20** require that the development of the School’s strategy involves **Managers, People, Stakeholders and others.**

At Kidbrooke School, the action plan is developed by all stakeholders: Staff, Governors, Parents and the children too. The Assessor received positive feedback to confirm this from all parties with the exception of the children.

The process of developing the action plan “...goes up and down...from the SMT, back to the teaching staff and then to focus groups involving governors, parents and students.”

“We all get a chance to have input into the plan, even the kids...”

“We are the Schools ‘critical friend’ and that includes during the development of the plan...”

■ Other areas of strength identified during the Assessment

In addition to specific evidence requirements identified above, the Assessor identified a number of other areas of particular strength. Because these evidence requirements were not part of the plan, specific questions were not systematically asked of the interviewees. Therefore, this section will seek to identify general areas of strength without specific reference to individual evidence requirements.

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- Mentoring is in widespread use within the School and many interviewees expressed how much this process was valued.
- Learning and development is of prime importance, which may be expected in an educational establishment. The creative ethos within the school has helped enable cross departmental learning. People could talk about how they were encouraged to try new approaches to their learning and take risks without being afraid of negative feedback if the approaches did not always work.
- Behaviour is linked with the School's core values. It is not surprising therefore to find that all staff consider it essential to act as role models for both their peers and students. As mentioned earlier, this role model culture has been linked with the high levels of harmony that the School enjoys.

■ Areas For Possible Development

- Though people were generally happy with the recognition they received, consideration should be given to a more comprehensive and far reaching reward and recognition strategy. This is not to suggest a 'Teacher of the Month' style programme, (which would not suit the culture of the School). However, there may be value in linking reward and recognition to personal motivation factors of individual members of staff. Such strategies can be externally benchmarked and linked to strategic objectives.
- Though the issue is not wide spread, there may be value in clarifying development routes within the School. Aligning personal development plans to promotions through various grades may allow a more inclusive and focussed approach to progression through the ranks.

■ Assessment Findings

I. A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood

Kidbrooke School has developed a strong purpose and vision and has incorporated this within the School Improvement Plan. This Plan, as identified earlier, is developed with the full involvement of Staff, Parents, Governors and Students. Objectives are communicated and agreed with all departments and these are focussed primarily around GCSE A* - C achievement.

"My targets are also measured at Key Stage 3. If the kids are not performing then, they will not succeed at exam time."

"I have to create 2 [events] a year. The kids really benefit from doing this."

"I have to achieve x% improvement in [subject]."



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2. Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisations objectives

The School's learning and development needs are clearly understood by top management.

"Staff need to understand APP (Assessment of Pupil Progress). It is essential that we know if children have understood the learning.

Evaluation is primarily through the ever improving performance of the students at exam time. The school has enjoyed significant year on year improvement in A* - C grades, university applications and placements. The other important measure is found in the evaluation of the progress of each individual student. This is not necessarily linked to exam performance but is rather a reflection of the students' development and the 'journey' they have taken.

Observations are also a key method of evaluating improving performance and also offer a vital method of confirming the success of professional development.

"Copies of lesson observations all go to the Head, analysed to determine what actions are required."

"We have a Department Action Plan that identifies our objectives and we track this throughout the year."

"We have to increase the rate of progress."

"I know my team is developing all the time because I can see it in the observations I do."

People identify their learning and development needs through the appraisal system, but also through regular observations.

"Our performance targets are set at the beginning of the year and we look at what we need. For instance I need [software] training and it will be delivered in-house."

Staff were also clear about what learning and development was trying to achieve:

"It increases our ability to help children."

"It is really about helping me in my job role."

3. Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisations people

At every level, new and creative ideas are sought to bring out the best from the students. The Specialist Art College status enjoyed by the School, permeates all aspects of the school curriculum and creates a culture where everyone is genuinely committed

The involvement of people in the generation of ideas starts at the Improvement Plan stage. "It's designed at the outset to include everyone. We get people to do blue sky thinking to identify what we need to do."

"We have regular review meetings with my team. We always ask 'how can we jazz this up?'"

"We get a lot of ideas from our cross curricular activities"

"This School is always looking for creative ideas to enhance our delivery. It's always what we are about."

"I have very regular meetings with my manager and we are always looking at creative ways of teaching."

"We have meetings with no agenda and plan things which we think would work."

Equality in all its aspects is core to the values of the School. Support for everyone is ensured through regular observations and the associated feedback, performance appraisals, and regular weekly meetings.

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"I give time to my team every month to make sure they are developing."

People responded very positively when asked whether they believed managers were genuinely committed to supporting them.

"Definitely, we have a great support network."

"The head has always supported me. If I needed time off for instance, I have never been knocked back."

"Whatever I have asked for [X] has always said yes."

4. The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people are clearly defined and understood

The School moved away from 'Head of Subject' to 'Team Leader' and the job descriptions have been re-written to reflect the leadership qualities required.

The School has re-defined managing and leading: Managing was defined in interviews as 'Getting things done' whilst Leadership was defined as 'Creating the right environment, building the values, ideas and creativity in the team.'

"Managers need to be good communicators, inclusive, good listeners, non aggressive."

A leadership/manager programme has been rolled out to ensure that these characteristics are developed: 'Managing From The Middle'.

These qualities were understood by the interviewees.

"I need to support my team, be a role model, be open, work out what they need and lead by example."

"Professional conduct, work with colleagues and take them with me."

"Make people understand, be patient be confident and resilient and have professional integrity."

"Share priorities make them feel supported, understand their needs and recognize the needs of different people."

People similarly gave a positive response to the role of the manager:

"...give me support, be accessible, looking at my needs and helping me develop."

5. Managers are effective at leading, managing and developing people

Both managers and people could provide evidence of management / leadership effectiveness.

"I do regular observations with my staff. It is my opportunity to give them support, and provide them with feedback and development support."

"I support my people by giving them feedback against the Ofsted criteria, and helping them develop."

"Following an observation, I identified a lack of student led learning. We discussed this after the lesson and agreed improvements."

"I raised the profile of [x], so people would understand what they did and therefore get the recognition they deserved."

People were positive about the effectiveness of their manager and the quality of the feedback they receive.

"My manager is always supportive. In fact the whole school is brilliant."

"...always takes my ideas on board..."

"My manager went on [course] and then came back and shared the knowledge with me and helped me role it out."

"I always get support. When I was under pressure, he stepped in and gave me a break, took over my tutor group."



6. People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued

Though there are no formal systems in place, both managers and people could verify that there is suitable recognition and value for the efforts of the staff.

"I give regular verbal praise, also by email. I also write letters to people to thank them for their work."

"I always thank them. I sometimes give them presents, or I ask them to take the lead in their area of expertise."

"I always get praise from my manager."

"I delivered [x] and got letters from senior management thanking me."

"I know my manager appreciates what I do because I get used as an example to others."

People were very clear about the difference they make to the performance of the school. Between 2006 and 2009 Kidbrooke School was the 64th most improved school in England, with an improve score on A*-C of 41% from 19%. Everybody could talk about there are of work and elate their efforts to this impressive level of improvement.

"The GCSE mocks were very positive, they exceeded expectations."

"My GCSE group started with low ability, but ended up with A*-C's. So I added value."

"We monitor and measure our children, then devise appropriate interventions."

"We have had massive exposure to leadership thinking."

7. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making

Decision making and ownership are core principles at Kidbrooke School. The process of agreeing the Improvement Plan (discussed earlier) is testament to this. Both managers and people could confirm that the culture within the School promotes high levels of ownership and responsibility.

"Performance management is about setting targets. My team meetings are democratic; our action plan is written together."

"I let my team lead their own groups. They decide the areas of work and plan it out."

"I create a positive environment. I always say 'That's your space, do what you want.'"

"We all get involved in the planning of our department, deciding on our objectives."

"I get lots of autonomy, finding and developing courses. We can be completely creative."

"They are very good at giving responsibility."

"Teachers are so happy for me to take the thing off their hands."

8. People learn and develop effectively

As highlighted earlier, the School has a comprehensive system of appraisals, observations and other regular contacts between managers and their team. These processes ensure that people get the development they need to satisfy the needs of the School.

"After our Performance Management meetings, we agree development activities for each member of staff. We also listen closely to our people and they can identify their own personal objectives throughout the year. If we can do it, it will be done."

People could give good examples of how their learning needs were met and how they applied this learning in their role.

"We get regular 'inset days' and these are useful CPD sessions for improving our teaching."

"We have access to a range of video tutorials; [x] was useful for me in improving my documents."

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“My H&S training has been invaluable. Without it, I couldn’t do the job>”

“We have training to learn about autism. This has been very very helpful in improving how we deal with certain situations.”

“I did a development course [title]. I could apply this immediately in the classroom.”

Induction at the School is structured and designed to give new recruits a full introduction, not only into the practicalities of the School but also the culture.

“My induction was over 2.5 days and included 1 to 1 training with my line manager. It was definitely helpful.”

“We had an extra day for induction when the School was closed. We covered the principles of student centred learning and success criteria.”

“Induction was very hands on. I was paired with existing staff who had a checklist to complete. It was very useful.”

9. Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation

As highlighted earlier in this report, Kidbrooke School has enjoyed significant improvements in its performance over recent years.

The current budget for development is £X though less than half of this has been spent. This lack of expenditure reflects a shift in the style of development towards more in-house skill sharing.

Top Management are confident that the significant improvements the School has enjoyed is a function of the commitment to continued development and the focus of that development on the needs of the child and how they learn.

The evaluation of the School’s investment has validated the current strategy of focussing on Leadership skills, coaching skills and development through Observations and Inset days.

Managers could give many examples of improvements they have seen in the school as a result of the increased investment in staff development. “Obviously, exam results are improving. But more than this, our focus is not just an exam results; we are making a significant improvement in realising student potential and making learning a joyful experience.”

“I can tell from the observations I do that the quality of lessons is really improving. We are getting some really good and innovative ideas in the classroom and that helps meet our objectives of encouraging a creative environment.”

People were confident in linking learning and development activities with their own personal improved performance and that of the school. Specifically, the respondents could describe the improvement in the planning and delivery of lessons, and the general improvement in the way they would interact and excite students, focussing on student led learning.

10. Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed

There have been some significant changes to the way the School manages its people over recent years.

“3 years ago we moved to a ‘collective responsibility’ and started to critically assess how we could increase our impact. We started our cross curricular projects and reflected these in our School Improvement Plan. Our action plans included aspects for teams, leaders and a pastoral element.”

“CPD was disparate, now we have a School wide approach. We have strengthened our induction process, and included ‘buddying’. We have developed coaching skills distinct from mentoring.”

Managers too could give examples of improvements:

“Questioning in the classroom was identified as an area for improvement. We have delivered lots of CPD for this, coaching videos and 1 to 1 sessions.”

People have described an environment where team work has increased, there are better communications, and that senior management are more visible.

“We get lots of Insets, and we are asked for lots of feedback.”

“We now have a portfolio for our CPD. Everyone gets one as part of their personnel record, and training files are now on a shared drive.”

■ Recommendation and Next Steps

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for Assessors by Investors in People UK, the Assessor is totally satisfied that Kidbrooke School meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.

Subject to the Recognition Panel endorsing the Assessor’s recommendation, the Investors in People recognition is granted indefinitely, with a proviso that reviews take place no greater than 3 years apart. Reviews can be undertaken at any time and the organisation should discuss the timing of the first review with their Assessor and Adviser, using the Improvement Planning Meeting to agree the best strategy for future use of the Investors in People framework.

Serious consideration should be given to achieving a higher standard of achievement. Given the current level of compliance, a Bronze or Silver award should be easily within the grasp of the School and would better reflect the efforts and improvements in performance that the School has realised.

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■ Options for your next Review

Investors in People Rolling Review

Rolling Review is a popular model for ongoing assessment which builds evidence over a three year timeframe, rather than all at once every three years. An annual visit can be focussed on the parts of the framework most relevant to you at the time, reflect changing business priorities and focus on different parts of your organisation at different stages.

Internal Review

Internal Review is a flexible review option available to all Investor in People organisations. It was introduced because recognised organisations identified that they wanted more involvement and ownership of their post recognition reviews. Internal Review works on selected principles of quality assured self-assessment and must be conducted with the full involvement of Capital Quality Limited. We develop your people to a nationally approved standard, providing you with an internal resource to enable you to monitor your own performance, target your resources appropriately and participate more fully in the review process.

Investors in People Interactive

This free online support tool is designed to guide you through development activities and help you maintain the benefits of using Investors in People as an organisational development tool. Obtain an on-going understanding of your organisation's current strengths and development areas by using the tool's diagnostic function which is built around 5 management practices which relate directly to the Investors in People indicators

You can also review and update your progress within the tool and access a wide range of downloads, good practice tips, templates and other resources to inspire and inform - no matter where you are on your Investors in People journey

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/interactive

Promoting continuous improvement

CQL offers an integrated advice and assessment support service, as well as workshops, surgeries and networking events to promote continuous improvement and maximize the benefits of working with the Standard. Details of the support available to you can be found on: -

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Annex B
Outcomes Table

Evidence Requirements Framework Matrix

Core Standard										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	
5	✓		✓						✓	
6	✓									

Wider Framework										
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core		Core				Core	
5	Core		Core						Core	
6	Core									
7	✓									
8	✓									
9										
10	✓									
11	✓									
12	✓									
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