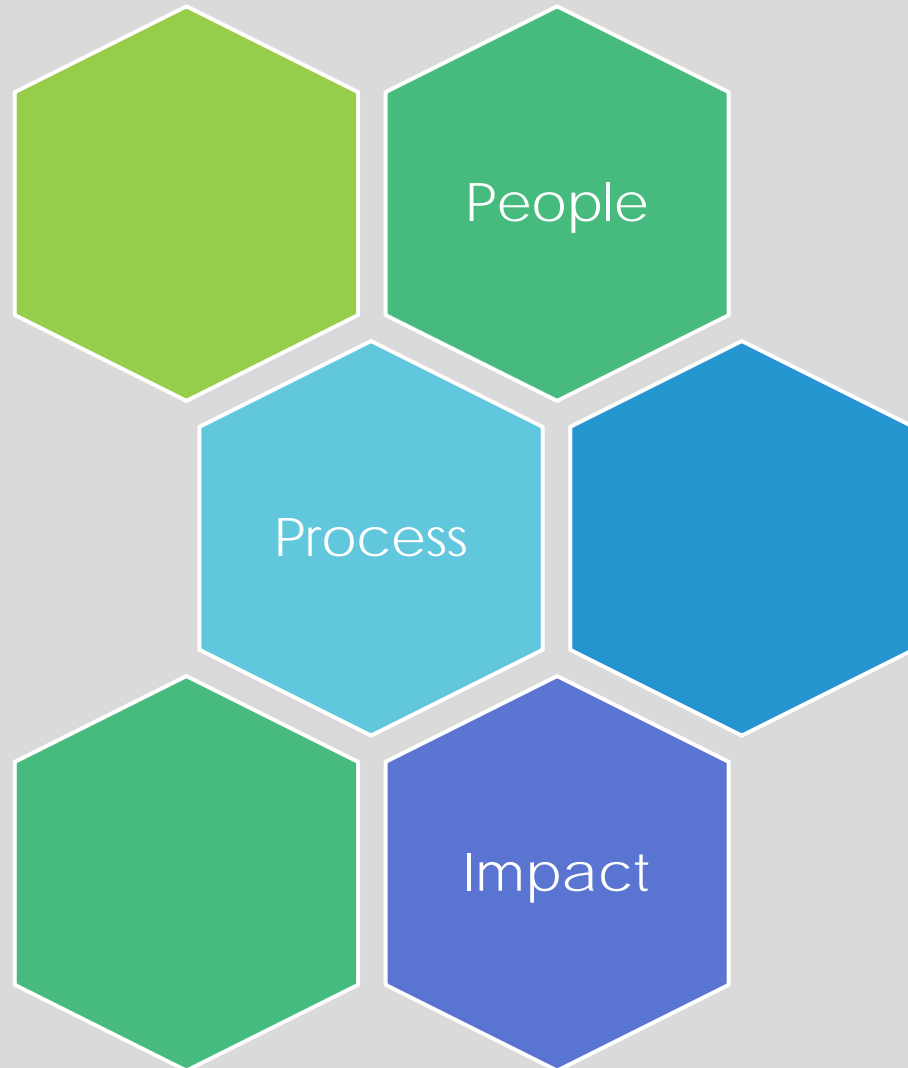




UW PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

KEY AREAS OF DISCUSSION



Much like the nature of leadership, this partnership work appears to be both **relationship-oriented** and **task-oriented**.

It deals in human development within people-powered organisations, both on an individual level and on an organisational one.

To that end, the data collected on the review day has been organised into three key areas: that which relates to people; that which relates to processes and practice development; and finally, that which discusses the impact upon the children and communities that this partnership serves.

Leaders make it clear that this is a development opportunity which **supports them holistically**, not just as a faceless school leader but as a *person* who leads. Every aspect of this work is anchored in relationships which are described as “**reassuring and refreshing**” and within which, “**expertise of one another is treasured**”.

These relationships are thought to act as **a compass for shared values** and how best to enact them. The emotional impacts these professional relationships have on each leader include feelings of **validation and inspiration**, **renewed energy** and **emotional self-regulation** through the exploration of shared stressors.

On a cognitive level, leaders report that this work **combats “fuzzy thinking”** and “**noseblindness**”. It **shifts thinking away from “fighting fires”** toward **deeper work** which is central to the vision of the school and the trust.

The trustful relationships here create comfort in not knowing and afford a like-minded but challenging soundboard which is anchored within a context of **appreciative inquiry** and **accountability processes**.

PEOPLE: WHAT DOES THIS DO FOR LEADERS?

“It’s not just a comfortable group of backslappers”

PROCESS: WHAT DOES THIS DO FOR PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT?

This is not simply a school improvement activity, but a vehicle for innovation

Leaders made clear that this is “not an easy process” and that “**high levels of challenge and accountability** have been developed with each other”. The triad work allowed for conversations which, on the face of it, may appear to be akin to Ofsted inspection activities. These include learning walks, looking at student work, lesson observations, meetings with staff and so on. Crucially however, this accountability does not replicate the usual punitive nature of regulatory inspections. Due to the **mutual trust** developed and resulting **willingness to highlight areas of development for scrutiny**, these conversations prove far more meaningful in allowing for **a forensic exploration of practice, its challenges, and, in turn, its development**. The result of this is that leaders feel **development is accelerated**. Practice looks “outward and upward” which capitalises on shared expertise and is **anchored in a mutual moral purpose**.

“This stuff is the BIG stuff”

Leaders described this triad work as **a school-centred agenda, amplified**. The difference between this and other development opportunities seem analogous with the difference between formative and summative assessment, whereby the latter is tasked with making a snap judgement of a finalised product and the former is **embedded within continuous process of development**. It is made clear that even specific issues raised provide ample learning opportunities for others, meaning that both host schools and those attending host schools benefit from each interaction.

THE PROCESS – CONTINUED.

Leaders make clear that this work feeds directly into their wider development plans and promotes widespread empowerment and sustained, shared thinking and action across schools. Staff are supported in their professional development both in terms of opportunities for leadership within wider teams as well as independent assessment of the impact of their own practice. Leaders highlight that they see the “lightbulb moments” in their staff as well as their students which they attribute to this work.

Rather than conducting a conclusive assessment of quality within a system fraught with fear of failure, this work provides the opportunity for a “bespoke”, “forward-focussed”, “deep-dive” process of quality assurance. This is intrinsically motivated and therefore improvements are embedded within an area which proves meaningful for the school. This positioning means that delicate issues and lines of inquiry are not off the table but instead tackled together in a mutually beneficial way.



IMPACT: WHAT DOES THIS DO FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES?

Leaders refer to the children across the local authority as 'our children' and it is clear that consideration for children's outcomes is at the heart of everything they do.

Some of the specific impacts identified by leaders include:

- Quality assurance of teaching and learning within specific subjects (for example the writing curriculum)
- Sharing of ideas and promoting best practice such as experience days and effective use of success criteria
- **Peripheral improvements** due to exposure to other schools (for example, magpie-ing behaviour management strategies)
- **Bespoke, problem-based reflection** which draws upon the expertise of multiple leaders and their combined experiences
- Accelerated development of recovery curriculum
- **Greater accountability of other staff** within the school which benefits from the same **appreciative approach** to practice development
- Opportunities for staff across the school to lead in practice development and rationalise their theory for practice
- Supports capacity for large scale change such as new PE scheme, overhaul of the writing curriculum or changes in staff structures
- Supports adaptive capacity
- **Creates parity and widens opportunity for children across the local authority area**

KEY THEMES

A word cloud of key themes in development, overlaid on a background of a wooden desk with books and a laptop. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with the most prominent words in the center. The words are color-coded: blue for the most prominent, green for medium, and purple for less prominent.

development

work

expertise

thinking

process

practice

journey

human

capacity

improvement

capitalises

flexibility

appreciative

adaptive

trust

humility

relationships

learning

serves

relates

mutual

meaningful

opportunity

developed

children

professional

level

sharing

quality

vulnerability

anchored

people

people-powered

potential

impacts

bespoke

reassuring

accelerated

emotional

compass

shared

partnership

nature

inquiry

accountability

supports

leaders

willingness

THANK YOU

If you have any queries or comments regarding any of the data presented here, please feel free to contact me on emma.bailey@worc.ac.uk

Where other resources are thinly spread within education, this partnership serves to leverage the existing wealth of resource within schools across MATs. It appears to reciprocally nurture and capitalise on the fuel within people-powered systems: people.