

*Achieving more
together*



Federation News November 2014

**Incorporating the
Annual Report
2013 - 2014**

SLF Annual Report 2013–14

Newsletter November 2014

Directors and Institutions, 2013-2014

Mr S Wilkinson, The Queen Katherine School
(Chair: September 2013– August 2014)
Mr P Hyman, Kirkbie Kendal School
(Vice -chair: September 2013– August 2014)

Ms M Bailey, John Ruskin School
Mr W Bancroft Dallam School
Mr C Clarke, Queen Elizabeth School
Mr A Cunningham, The Lakes School
(from January 2014)
Mrs J Fletcher Sandgate School
Ms K Fox, University of Cumbria
Dr J Greene, Settlebeck School
Mr A Lund, Appleby School
Mr G Wilkinson, Kendal College
Dr P Williams, Cartmel Priory School

Introductory remarks from Mr Steve Wilkinson SLF Chair 2013 – 2014

It was a privilege to take the SLF Chair for the third time and in our 10th Anniversary Year.

It was the first full year for Appleby Grammar School as a new member of the Federation and also the year in which Kirkby Stephen Grammar School reached a decision to join in September 2014. Both schools are most welcome, and we look forward to their contributions and equally to the Federation offering what support they may in turn wish for. We were also pleased to welcome Andy Cunningham, headteacher of the Lakes School, to the SLF Board in January.

In the last ten years we have seen Specialist Colleges, UTC's, Academies, Career Colleges and Teaching Schools within the education system. All are government initiatives dependent on Central Government for funding, direction and accountability. The Federation is different: we own it; we set its direction; we pay for it and we make it work for the benefit of over 6000 learners, hundreds of staff and their professional and career development.

Initiatives come and go, as do Governments. Who knows what the next 10 years will bring? However, we know that in working together we can help control our own destiny, influence more effectively and achieve more.

One of our officers, Marian Kearney, left our service after 9 years and will be missed. Her influence and direction, particularly in helping us to become an inclusive set of schools, has been extraordinary.

Federation Staff changes from 1 September 2014

As reported by the Chair, Marian Kearney retired at the end of August 2014. You may be interested to know that she is now working as a volunteer on a project in Nigeria which, if her emails are anything to go by, she finds both exhilarating and challenging.

However, back in the world of the federation, we were left needing to carry on Marian's good work. We are pleased to report that Mick Gallop, Deputy Head, from the Lakes School, has been seconded for one day a week to lead SLF Inclusion work, especially the Inclusion Advocates and the Student Engagement and Pastoral Support Group. We are grateful to Mick for taking on this important role and indebted to The Lakes School for agreeing to his release.

In addition, we are grateful to Pete Weston from QES, for picking up the reins of the SENCo group and Theresa Murray from The Lakes for coordinating the Careers Group.

Enid is also on her way to retirement and has reduced her time as Executive Officer to one day a week; we are grateful to Jane Henderson for putting in extra time to support Enid and Steve Houghton until such time as a new appointment is made.

And again, as Steve Wilkinson has mentioned, last year was the tenth anniversary of the South Lakes Federation – and the news hit the press!

'South Lakes schools group marks ten year anniversary'

was the headline that preceded a picture of three of our headteachers: the two founder members

and a reluctant but carefully placed Judith Greene in the foreground. (The editor insists that it is reproduced in this report; no complaints or the Christmas jumper one will appear next!)



'Ten years on, its original members Cartmel Priory, Dallam, John Ruskin, Kirkbie Kendal, Lakes, Queen Elizabeth School, Queen Katherine School, Settlebeck, Sandgate Special School, Kendal College and the University of Cumbria are all still going strong and have been joined by Appleby School' went the report.

And indeed that is exactly the case. After describing some of the strengths of the federation, the article concluded:

'The SLF will not rest on its laurels. This year, it has decided to challenge itself even more by being extra rigorous in the expectations of every organisation in the partnership and by more formally holding each other to account for progress'

And, true to our word:

School to School Support: a more rigorous accountability in the SLF

In June, members agreed that Governing Bodies would approve and sign an agreement this term which underscores the intention of our partnership to act with rigour and robustness in addressing the school improvement agenda.

The SLF Executive now has explicit responsibility for monitoring and evaluating school performance and in negotiation with Heads, for directing support and intervention as required. Whilst school improvement has always been at the core of our work we felt it important to state formally

our strength as a partnership as a range of Academy Chains and Multi Academy Trusts appear to be circling some Cumbrian schools.

As we write we are in the midst of our annual cycle of peer review visits to evaluate examination results for 2014, calibrate and validate self-evaluation judgements and Action Plans for improvement including the brokering of school to school support as appropriate.

Curriculum Group

At the time of writing we are busy preparing for an important meeting of our curriculum group. Changes to school accountability measures, GCSE and A level reforms alongside ever decreasing financial resources are certainly testing the minds of our curriculum designers. We are all keen to get the balance right between providing a curriculum that caters for the needs of all students whilst ensuring that school/college positions in performance tables and OFSTED reports remain strong. We'll report on the outcomes of this day in our Spring Term newsletter.

Governor Training

We continue to support Governor Training and in the summer term another well attended event was hosted by Kirkbie Kendal School.

The evening focussed on two core themes. Pete Weston (QES) and Marian Kearney (SLF) provided governors with an overview of the new statutory arrangements for young people with additional learning needs whilst Steve Houghton facilitated an interactive session on questions that governors might be asked during the course of inspections.

The evening provided an opportunity to share how each of our schools might respond if they were asked these questions. We are in the process of building up a "bank" of actual questions which we are adding to as inspections occur across our partnership.

One governor suggested adding to the bank of questions ...

" Is your HT really as bossy as they appear?"

Which school did this governor represent I hear you ask? Answers on a postcard to Enid Fraser c/o South Lakes Federation (perm any one of 11 we say)!

More seriously, an electronic list of the questions is available to all schools should governing bodies require them for further training purposes.

We are keen to hear from Governors as to what they consider to be their training priorities for the current academic year.

Initial teacher Training (ITT)

2014-15 is a particularly important year for ITT developments. The emerging South Cumbria School Centred ITT (SC SCITT) is taking shape with its Board members, representing schools across the SLF and Furness areas, determining its priorities and its delivery. Marketing and recruitment are our first challenges but for all of us in ITT, this year will be a time of change and an important transitional period.

Whilst we will be maintaining our partnership with the University of Cumbria, the South Cumbria SCITT development will offer us the opportunity to work together as professionals with the vision to coordinate outstanding teacher training across the south of Cumbria. A wealth of expertise will be used to give a livelier and more invigorating student experience with many opportunities to learn from complex and contrasting school contexts. By working together in our schools, we will all be part of a team committed to training the very best teachers for future employment within our local schools.

Provision for Newly Qualified and Recently Qualified Teachers (NQT/RQT)

This term 20 NQTs registered with us as new staff in our schools. They have already held a social networking event and in November begin the first of a series of Conference days designed to support their induction. These occasions are fantastic opportunities for lead staff from primary and secondary schools to work with the newest recruits to SLF schools and give them a flavour of how we work together.

This is reflected in the extended opportunities we are providing for our RQTs. The first of these takes place this month and is a morning at Kirkbie Kendal School on the subject of 'Differentiation'.

These opportunities will enable new teachers to focus on their own professional development supported by our school colleagues.

Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs)

As you may recall from previous newsletters we are a regional training centre for Specialist Leaders in Education. The training is co-ordinated by Adrian Hall (AHT QES) with Steve Houghton and Gemma McMullen (KK) supporting the delivery.

This term two core training events, for about 25 colleagues across Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Lancashire have been hosted at Queen Elizabeth School.

One of the sessions was 'Quality Assured' by an external moderator from the Manchester area and we were extremely pleased with the outcome and have lifted the following quotation from his report....

Course Facilitation and Delivery:

"Outstanding!

The facilitators' manner, style and personalities put the context across in a way that, quite simply, models the behaviour that SLEs will be expected to exhibit in their roles.

It is hard to state this explicitly without appearing immodest, but one would like to think that the delegates have the wherewithal to pick this up subliminally.

The presenters are good humoured, inclusive and personable within a very professional approach.

Their knowledge and experience comes through implicitly throughout".

Congratulations to everyone involved.

Professional Development

On 24th October we delivered a blend of school focussed and area wide training events for SLF staff. In total over 20 workshops catered for over 300 colleagues from across the partnership. Most workshops were led by SLF staff but as you can see we were also able to access some external facilitators.

We are very grateful to all colleagues who helped to make the day such a great success including the

Science Department of Lancaster University who hosted a series of sessions for our colleagues. Responses to the sessions are currently being collated but there have already been many enthusiastic and positive comments about the nature of the sessions and the useful discussions that took place. For example:

'I think the session...provided a genuinely unique training opportunity for staff...' and '(this was)...a motivating and upbeat reminder of what we all aspire to in our teaching....' Now that's what we want to hear!

What follows is just a selection of sessions offered on the day.

Title	Description
Curriculum Change – an overview	A curriculum overview for HODs and subject staff. Aimed at increasing the awareness of curriculum developments and new accountability measures that will impact on curriculum provision and classroom practice.
Changing Role of the Pastoral Staff: Tracking	This session is for both experienced pastoral leaders interested in sharing good practice in this area and for colleagues new to pastoral leadership who wish to find out more about this changing role. The mechanics of this facilitated active session will be sharing of ideas and good practices around the table rather than one of 'presentation by an expert'.
Use of Apps / software with post 16 learners	Colleagues from Kendal College will demonstrate the use of a range of Apps / software which they have found to be effective with post 16 learners. This will include cloud technologies, google 1 drive, prezi and creating blogs. For all teachers of post 16 students.
HISTORY	For all History teachers, KS5 and selected KS4 students: Morning session (beginning at 11.30): a choice of talks by academic historians on topics which appear in the new KS3 curriculum. We hope that this will engage, enthuse and update teaching staff: The Black Death: Dr Rosemary Horrox, University of Cambridge The English Civil War: presenter TBC British Imperialism: presenter TBC Europe in the 1930s: Professor Michael Hughes of Lancaster University Students will also be invited to attend these talks as a taste of university study.
MFL	Engagement, Motivation and Challenge at KS4 to meet the demands of the new GCSE and the future. Presenter Juliet Park is Director MFL at Yewlands Academy and has a national profile in training, qualification development and consultancy from primary to A level. She is also a specialist in business languages for schools.

Inclusion

Mick Gallop writes:

Inclusion Advocates

The inclusion advocates group of the SLF has been in existence for over eight years. The group is comprised mainly of deputy and assistant head teachers, school based education welfare staff, representatives from Cumbria LA and our local Pupil Referral Unit in Barrow. Inclusion advocates meet at least once a half term, usually monthly.

The group held a very special meeting at the end of the last academic year to say a very fond farewell and thank you to Marian Kearney. Marian had been the Federation Inclusion Manager for nine years. Her efforts have resulted in a group of professionals working together to secure better outcomes for those most at risk of exclusion and of becoming NEETs (not in education, employment, or training). The group now continues without Marian but all involved are committed to working together to improve education for the young people of South Lakeland.

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 term already the Advocates have enabled nine managed moves to take place between SLF schools. Ann Downe, Early Intervention Strategic Manager has met with the group to explain the new Local Authority Early Help Assessment that replaces the Common Assessment Form.

Two 'hard to place' students have had their educational provision agreed. Currently four students from SLF schools are on the roll of the

PRU and another four are due to start part-time placements before the end of this term.

John Fawcett the Student Inclusion Mentor is working with tutors in delivering accredited courses in Art; Countryside Skills and Woodland Management and Cycle Maintenance. These courses provide an alternative to the curriculum offered by SLF schools and are a valuable way to engage and motivate students at risk of exclusion.

Sadly, after seven years in this post John will be moving onto to new opportunities after the Christmas break. The Inclusion Advocates are very pleased that Simone Backhouse has been appointed to the post after John leaves in the New Year.

Student Engagement and Pastoral Support (SEPS) Group

This group meets termly. The purpose of the group is to disseminate best practice in the SLF relating to pastoral support. Currently the group is involved in a Mental Health Audit of pupils based on that completed by QES. This will help inform future action planning and deployment of support staff and services.

During the year, schools used some specific grant money to research and share ways to improve the emotional wellbeing and resilience of young people. The priority this year is to follow this up by working together to create an Emotional Resilience Policy.

We shall also share individual school responses to the LA audit of safeguarding priorities as well as the peer review of a number of school policies relating to the safeguarding of young people.

Careers Group

Theresa Murray writes:

Careers Co-ordinators from all schools meet together on a termly basis and last year worked hard to develop a careers education quality standard for all SLF schools to work towards. The standard conforms to the recent changes in national policy on how careers education should be developed and was approved by the SLF Board in June.

The first school to pilot the moderation of the standard is going to be The Lakes School supported by Dallam and Kirkbie Kendal schools as peer reviewers. The moderation model will involve all members of the group in a role either as visiting school or peer reviewer by summer 2015.

The aim is to promote and share the good practice within the Careers Group and draw out potential areas for improvement.

Future work for the year will also focus on the development of a survey to be used across all partners in the group to collect feedback from students, parents and carers and provide an SLF – wide picture of the service provided.

SENCO Group

Pete Weston is now coordinating the SENCo group which has discussed what it wants to achieve as a group at this stage: to have a coordinated approach to addressing SEN needs and in particular in implementing the new SEND Code of Practice which throws up many new challenges for schools.

The need to share information and thinking between schools is probably more important than ever. The group believes that there should be more guidance on the implementation of the new code of practice and is hoping to be joined by an LA SEND representative in the near future.

At the last meeting, Kirkbie Kendal had recently been inspected and so their SENCo, Kyrine Townley was able to share useful information and the questions that schools should expect to be asked.

Concluding Remarks: Enid Fraser

I hope you have enjoyed reading this annual report and newsletter and that it has given you a fair view of the work of the federation. Please contact us if you need more information or have contributions to make to the next newsletter.

Once again the central team has reduced in size but continues its aim of offering an excellent service. I know I speak for everyone in recording thanks to Sarah Platt who keeps a close eye on our spending and patiently tries to make us all more efficient, John Fawcett who works so hard and with such good humour to support those students on additional programmes, Jane Henderson, described as a Training Officer but who works with such dedication on so many different fronts – training and development, ITT to name but two – and Steve Houghton whose title Director of Quality and Development hardly does justice to the wide scope of his work and the support he offers to colleagues in schools.

This term it is also good to work with new colleagues who are so busy every day in their own schools but bring something new to us. We are grateful for their valuable contribution to the work of the federation.

So one decade has passed for the federation and we move into the next one with confidence and the determination to live out our motto.

