

IIP Report

Brine Leas School has achieved an excellent Investors in People recognition.

The leadership of the school is excellent, creating an open working environment where people learn continually from each other and where observation and constructive criticism are the norm. Teachers expect to be observed on both a formal and an ad hoc basis and this provides exceptional learning opportunities for newly qualified and more experienced teachers.

School development planning and the SEF are well planned, inclusive and well executed. The system of departmental review is excellent, being challenging and constructive, and providing a clear framework for development.

The new Sixth Form Centre was smoothly implemented, new staff recruited and existing staff were given the appropriate CPD support their A Level teaching. Induction of new staff has been well thought out and delivered over a period of time, and all are appointed buddies and mentors. The sixth form achieved excellent results in its first year, and the high standard of GCSE results was maintained.

The school has an excellent recruitment and selection procedure. Candidates are invited into school for up to a day, have a number of interviews with staff members, undertake tasks such as teaching a lesson, are observed by a range of people from not just the recruiting department but from other departments, and junior staff as well as more senior people are involved. The school looks widely at applicants and brings more people in for interview than do many schools, on the basis that some excellent people may be missed if relying only on the application form. This process and wide range of feedback available ensure that the school recruits people who fit into the school's way of working and stay and grow their careers with the school.

Learning and development is excellent, well planned and resourced within a limited budget. Changes have been made to management development training to optimise quality and cost, and staff are given the opportunity to take leadership roles wherever possible.

People interviewed commented how friendly and welcoming all staff are and how well people worked together, unlike many of their previous schools.

Many staff are long serving, and many have been promoted within the school, against competition from external candidates. There is a healthy balance of the school growing its own people to work and manage in the Brine Leas way, and yet bringing in new people who can bring their 'fresh pair of eyes' and new ideas to help continuously improve school performance.

Brine Leas School takes its community responsibilities very seriously and works in the community with feeder schools and other secondary schools.

Strengths

I recommend that Brine Leas School continues and further reinforces the following areas of existing good practice:

- **Leadership and management** of the school is excellent. The head has provided a clear vision and strategy for the school. People interviewed had great confidence in the abilities of the head and the leadership and the direction in which the school was moving.

The leadership and managers were seen as being very open and approachable and supportive of staff.

- **Working culture** is open, fair, hard working, striving for achievement and supportive of staff, both personally and professionally. This culture is supported by excellent team work and sound communications.

- **Departmental review** provides an excellent planning and evaluation framework.

- **Learning and development** is very effective. People are confident they will receive all necessary training and development and the leadership and managers are considered to be excellent at coaching and knowledge sharing.

The quality of people development is reflected in the success of internal applicants for promotion in competition with external applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and experience.

There is a culture of continuous learning in the school, people are not afraid to take risks and people are confident in asking for help, accelerating learning and quickly improving performance.

- **People** interviewed felt valued, trusted and appreciated, and very happy to be working at Brine Leas School which was thought to be a great place to work.

Anne Milne
IIP Assessor
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