

Lancashire Education Awards



Case Study

Establishment name:	Gillibrand Primary School (Cluster Group)
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Lead contact name	Mrs Ashley Clayton
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Project title	Chorley Heads in Partnership (CHIP)
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Award gained

Award category	X
Innovate <i>A project that demonstrates practice that is new or ground breaking, which successfully engaged and enthused learners.</i>	
Achieve <i>A project had measurable impact on raising outcomes for pupils.</i>	
Invest <i>A project that has had a positive impact upon an aspect of the wider school community.</i>	
Collaborate <i>A project that involved work across more than one school or work with other agencies.</i>	X
Include <i>A project in provision for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities</i>	
Inspire <i>A project that demonstrates embedded exceptional provision of an aspect of the curriculum. Practice will have been developed and refined over time.</i>	

Project summary (maximum 200 words)

CHIP has always been about the following:

- increasing school to school collaboration to impact positively on school improvement in all schools
- sharing best practice
- providing school to school support for cluster schools
- developing the skills of leaders at all levels
- preventing schools becoming isolated
- sharing and jointly-tackling area school improvement priorities
- sharing staff and resources where this would benefit the children
- jointly self-evaluate and validate each other's self-evaluation
- sharing a wide range of CPD opportunities and so help schools who may not be in a strong financial position access high quality CPD
- supporting new leaders

but ultimately:

- always working together to improve outcomes for ALL Chorley children " whichever school they attend

How did you identify the need for this project? What were you hoping to achieve?

CHIP (Chorley Heads in Partnership) is a group of like minded teaching professionals across a cluster of 14 schools in Chorley which has been running for nearly 20 years now and I believe it needs some recognition for this collaboration and partnership between schools that has grown and developed over the years. As a new headteacher in Chorley, I cannot say strongly enough how crucial this support has been for me over the last 12 months, knowing I can telephone, email or meet up with other headteachers who will always offer support. It has offered myself access to a priceless and easily accessible mentorship that would have been difficult to obtain anywhere else. Everyone within the Cluster has readily offered their assistance, encouragement and support on numerous occasions and just knowing you have that wealth of knowledge behind you has been priceless to me during times of uncertainty and worry.

We currently have 14 schools involved in this successful partnership

All school leaders have shared ideals and there are common elements in everyone's vision for their school. The diversity of the nature of the schools and the strengths of the different leaders has allowed us to share good practice and expertise. We have been able to support each other's schools through various issues and have also shared celebrations and success.

Who led the project?

CHIP was initially started by Paul Duckworth 20 years ago. Leading CHIP has changed and involved over the years and the different facets of the CHIP group have allowed different school leaders to take on the role of leading projects. For example, the partnership with Edge Hill Teacher Training has been spearheaded by Duke Street School. iPad training has been led by St James, Chorley. Termly moderation of both core and foundation subjects takes place within the cluster and this has been led by a number of schools in the cluster.

What steps/actions did you take?

Training and moderation opportunities for all staff-development of middle leaders as well as senior leaders

Regular Headteacher meetings-once a month

DHT meetings-once a term.

Learning walks for HT and DHT across all schools

Sharing of research and development

School review - SPP

A range of joint sporting activities involving all schools e.g. annual cross country competition

Work within the Cluster has also allowed our children to have access to a wider range of specialist provision and wider opportunities for learning and enrichment. For example, our children have been able to showcase and develop their talents within music and performance in a festival which celebrated the Arts. They have also been able to reflect upon and develop their understanding of our shared values through an Ethos day at another school.

What was the impact of the project and how was this measured/assessed?

As a Headteacher the pastoral support cannot be measured. We can share ideas / problems and always have perspective from others.

A strong partnership with Edge Hill has led to a number of trainees becoming successful members of staff within schools in the cluster and contributing to the cluster ethos and development.

There has been a positive influence from this inter-school collaboration on teachers and teaching at all schools, with staff being given the opportunity to develop an increased motivation to engage in professional dialogue with their colleagues.

The SPP (School Partnership Program) which 10 schools were initially involved in last year has been fantastic in terms of school review and impacting positively on T&L. As a cluster, we are determined to move this forward into the new year, taking on board other schools in the cluster and sharing experiences with them so that all staff and all children in all the schools can benefit from this school to school support.

What are the next steps? How will you follow up this work?

This joint cluster work will continue to develop and strengthen. Together as a strong cluster, we work at supporting each other and continually improving and providing the best education for all our children. Quality CPD and support for schools in need is a strength of our partnership.

We will continue to look for further opportunities to enhance teaching and learning across our schools, such as a Blogging Project starting next year.

Do you have any other advice for establishments that might be considering a similar project?

CHIP works so well because of shared respect, trust and transparency between all the schools, and this is key to a successful working partnership.