

update



Leading Learning through
Action-led Research and Innovation

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE LAUREL TRUST

ISSUE 3 • WINTER 2020

MERRY CHRISTMAS



A Message from the Chair

The Trustees recognise all the hard work that schools have put in over the past nine months in this unprecedented situation.

We send our thanks and good wishes.

Bill Goddard
Chair of Trustees

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Working together for Success in Sheffield

In their article Fiona and Anna describe the impact of their multi-agency partnership on behalf of children and families in deprived areas of Sheffield. Their creative and sustainable approach led to increases in children working independently, greater teacher confidence and skills within and across schools. There are plans that their successful approach will be adopted city-wide.

By Fiona Rigby OBE, Headteacher of St Catherine's Catholic Primary School working with Fir Vale of Family of Schools and Anna Westaway, Speech and Language Therapist, Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust.



Fiona Rigby, OBE



Anna Westaway

Multi-agency working is one of the core principles of the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015), as well as the NICE Clinical Guidelines for supporting autistic children and young people (2013). Whilst there is guidance regarding the joint commissioning of services for children with SEND, there is more limited information suggesting how provision should be delivered jointly.

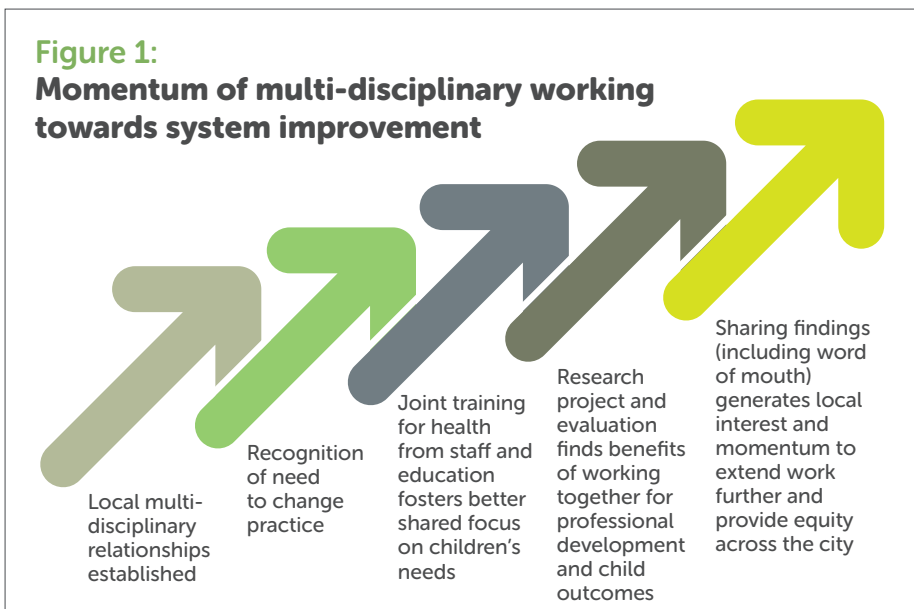
We are in need of more examples of how this looks in everyday practice, with more evidence of what different professions bring to the table. These examples should feature the factors below described by Lewis et al (2010):

“Factors supporting best practice include a strong ethos of inclusion; strong and effective multi-agency working; staff commitment and strong leadership; effective partnerships with stakeholders; and an adequate number of skilled staff at all levels”

Our project grew from established local multi-agency working patterns (including schools buying speech and language therapy from the local NHS provider), and ad-hoc opportunities to discuss needs, ideas and aspirations. Following the award of funding from the Laurel Trust, we undertook an action research project where school staff, speech and language therapists and educational psychology all undertook SCERTS (Prizant et al. 2005) training and applied the framework to children within mainstream school settings. Our experience of the practical impact of research is demonstrated by the figure overleaf:

continues over

Figure 1:
Momentum of multi-disciplinary working towards system improvement



Local relationships

For us, positive multi-professional relationships had grown organically from historical working patterns and a commitment from the schools involved to joint working with Speech and Language Therapy. These established relationships meant that both professions were open to suggestions and ideas from the other and provided a strong base for supporting each other in change.

Recognition of need to change

Growing caseloads and a changing intake for mainstream schools meant that traditional working patterns were no longer meeting the needs of an increasing number of learners with social communication needs and autism. Without accompanying increases in time, staffing or funding, we recognised the need to work smarter, not harder, to improve support for children with additional needs – as suggested by the authors of the SCERTS model (which fuelled this research project). All professions involved felt that with more opportunities for shared working and communication, we could

“...we recognised the need to work smarter, not harder, to improve support for children with additional needs...”

establish more effective support for our learners.

Joint training

The opportunity for different professions to learn together was invaluable. It placed teaching staff and therapists on an equal footing as learners and then as practitioners implementing the SCERTS framework. With neither profession leading as the ‘expert’, all were open to discussion, reflection and the willingness to try something new.

Joint research and evaluation

In the experience of our research project, implementation of new approaches, questioning and analysis of our data allowed the practitioners as well as the research leads to better understand the roles of other agencies, take



more opportunities to plan and review together to promote best practice for the child. Feedback from participants in our research findings showed that multi-agency working is highly valued across all professions.

Sharing findings and generating momentum

Even before we were able to disseminate our findings more formally, word-of-mouth within local networks generated a large amount of interest in our project. This ‘buzz’ led to increased interest to access similar training and ultimately a commitment from the local authority to fund SCERTS training city-wide for education, health care and social care practitioners. We believe that a key factor in achieving this systemic approach was the project’s commitment to multi-disciplinary working as a driver in ensuring that children with additional needs are settled in school and ready to interact, communicate and learn.

For more information on this project, please contact:

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Prizant, B.M., Wetherby, A.M., Rubin, E., Laurent, A.C.O. and Rydell, P.J., 2005. The SCERTS model: A comprehensive educational approach for children with autism spectrum disorders (Vol. 2). Paul H Brookes Publishing.

A TOUCH OF FRIVOLITY

Dame Pat Collarbone TRUSTEE



Covid Exercise?

Walking Tiggy, our Pembroke Corgi, and a more than usual amount of gardening.

Favourite Tipple?

a glass of excellent red wine.

Naughty or nice?

Nice – except when temptation strikes in the shape of delicious biscuits or a M&S iced fruit bun, then naughty!

Assuming you have been nice what present would you like Santa to bring you?

Friends and colleagues staying well and healthy and then something beautiful and blue – a cashmere sweater perhaps.

Rose Durban TRUSTEE



Covid Exercise?

Swimming in the sea – really easy to stay socially distant as usually the only one!

A good read?

Benedictus by John O'Donohue
War Doctor by David Nott
Uncharted by Margaret Heffernan
English Pastoral by James Rebanks.

Favourite Tipple? Coffee.

Naughty or nice? Nice of course!

Assuming you have been nice what present would you like Santa to bring you?

Loved ones staying safe and well - and a wetsuit.

Davinder Jhamat TRUSTEE



Covid Exercise? Cycling.

A good read?

Meditations
by Marcus Aurelius.

Favourite Tipple? Sauvignon Blanc.

Naughty or nice? Naughty.

Assuming you have been nice what present would you like Santa to bring you?

Families together in a safe manner.

Maggie Roger CONSULTANT DIRECTOR



Covid Exercise?

Walking our German Short-Haired Pointer, Polo, in the woods and sometimes by the sea.

A good read?

The Braid by L'aetita Colombani. A beautifully written and moving story about three brave women facing adversity with courage and stoicism. Their very different stories moved me to tears.

Shakespearean by Robert McCrumb

A fascinating new book which both connects Shakespeare to ourselves and the modern world in a fresh and original way and also reveals a new side to Shakespeare as a man and a playwright.

Also the novels of *William Boyd*.

Favourite Tipple?

It has to be Pol Roger Champagne! Seriously any champagne will be fine or a Diet Coke!

Naughty or nice?

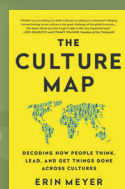
It rather depends on who is asking...

Assuming you have been nice what present would you like Santa to bring you?

My grandson's smiles, family and friends staying safe and some Italian perfume: *Danza di Fiori* by L'Erborario.

However the prize goes to our Chair, Bill Goddard who has read 39 books and recommends:

**The Culture Map:
Decoding How People
Think, Lead and Get Things
Done Across Cultures.**



Our World-Class Trustee



Pippa Bull has been a Trustee for over two years supporting projects in the London area. She is a graduate of London and Cambridge Universities and was previously a Primary School teacher and Head Teacher, local authority Schools Advisor and a Head of Children's Commissioning. She has been involved in many innovative initiatives and projects focusing on early intervention and prevention, supporting vulnerable children and their families.

After eight years as a Primary Headteacher Pippa was seconded to lead the Essex School Improvement Project that pioneered target setting

and developing new approaches to teacher assessment. Her interest in formative assessment led to her studying a Masters In Education at Cambridge engaging in an action research project focusing on school Improvement. As a local authority advisor and commissioner Pippa was involved in leading the design and development of new early intervention and prevention models of service delivery, developing multi-agency teams and local partnerships to support children, schools, and communities. Later this led to her managing the implementation of the Governments Troubled Families initiative in Essex. As a commissioner she secured funds to provide activities for children with special educational needs and disabilities engaging in joint commissioning and integrated working with health, social care, and schools. Pippa has been a governor across a wide education spectrum from Primary to further education and is currently a Trustee of a Multi Academy Trust.

Pippa enjoys volunteering and is involved in coaching hockey to the juniors at her local club and in primary schools across the town. She still plays hockey herself and has been an England Master for over 10 years participating in 4 World and 3 European Championships from Canterbury to Canberra winning gold each time!



Philosophy corner

DR MARCELO STARICOFF
Trustee | The Laurel Trust

The Philosophy Corner is a regular column in our Newsletters designed to promote a love of creative, critical and philosophical thinking at school and at home.

Each Newsletter will feature a set of themed philosophical questions to inspire children and adults with an enthusiasm for wonder and for becoming experts in the art of dialogue, discussion and debate. Each Philosophy Corner will also include a suggestion for further reading and exploration of philosophical thought from a very early age.

The theme in this issue is Thriving in an uncertain world:

- To what extent do you think that comfort is the enemy of progress?
- Is being outside our comfort zone the key to progressing as a learner?
- How can we ensure that our teaching enables children to *feel comfortable with being uncomfortable as learners?*

