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Inspiring history teachers through an effective area partnership: Hampshire Secondary History Network

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Brief description

History teachers in secondary schools in Hampshire are supported extremely well through the county's secondary history network. By working together in an effective partnership structure, history advanced skills teachers (AST)s, leading teachers, subject leaders and teachers from across the local authority are engaged in actively and successfully supporting each other to help improve teaching and learning in history in secondary schools. The dissemination of best practice is a priority and the network is at the centre of this process.

Overview – the network's message

'Through the work of the inspection and advisory service, we are committed to doing all we can to promote and sustain high-quality teaching and learning in history, and to improve the standards achieved by pupils and students in this subject. The Secondary History Network is a key element of our strategic planning and support for history in schools. We are proud of the fact that we have such an enthusiastic group of history teachers in our secondary schools who want to engage in network activities and that the network is able to provide effective support and guidance.'

Patricia Hannam, Inspector/adviser for RE and history in Hampshire

The good practice in detail

In Hampshire, the question of how to ensure secondary history teachers can access continuous high-quality training has been answered by establishing a highly effective self-help network. Led by a group of three history ASTs and a wider steering group of enthusiastic history teachers, the Hampshire Secondary History Network has for just under ten years focused on creating, developing, capturing and spreading best practice in history teaching throughout the county's secondary schools.

The network has two distinctive elements, both of which are dependent upon the support of the local authority in the form of Hampshire's Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS). They are:



- the history ASTs and the steering group
- the history curriculum centre.

Each of these significant elements is important in its own right and together they comprise a highly effective local authority partnership mechanism which supports teachers in improving history in schools across Hampshire.

The history ASTs and the steering group

Three ASTs work for up to one day a week on county business. Managed and led by Patricia Hannam, the county inspector/adviser for RE and history, they provide countywide support for schools and teachers at all stages of their careers. The support is bespoke and varies from school to school and from teacher to teacher. All the ASTs are experienced practitioners and are either currently or have been, in the recent past, leaders of highly effective departments. Over the years, they have become well established throughout the county. They contribute articles to national journals, such as *Teaching History*, and run workshops at national conferences, including those organised by the Historical Association and the Schools History Project. They are a highly effective team and an analysis of their AST work logs reveals a picture of regular and successful support and guidance for teachers across the county. In the words of Neil Bates, one of the three ASTs and based at Fort Hill School Basingstoke, help focuses on 'identifying strategies which will bring about long-term improvements. We're not interested in short-term fixes because they don't work'.



Impact example: support at Quilley School of Engineering

For a small school, such as Quilley School of Engineering, the work over the last two years with history AST in-school visits, history steering group and network meetings and the history conferences have been, in the words of Jean Haddock, head of humanities, 'absolutely invaluable'.

Over the past year, the history team has been led by a non-specialist teacher, who was delivering history at Key Stage 4, another non-specialist teacher and a non-qualified teacher with a degree in history. Recently, the balance has changed slightly in that the school has employed a qualified historian, even though the department is still led by a non-specialist and a non-qualified teacher.

The teachers needed clear guidance and the network provided it. Jean Haddock says: 'The willingness to share good working practices is outstanding. Everyone is prepared to give and share ideas about, for example, using sources, examining interpretations and teaching outstanding lessons. The visits by the ASTs have helped us to improve history for the benefit of the students.'

They have helped us to reinvigorate our schemes of work, lesson plans and our delivery. History is now an exciting and upbeat subject. In student voice, Year 9 pupils have commented that history is exciting, interesting and motivates them to complete their work to a high standard. The team will continue to refine their delivery of the subject in the knowledge that expertise is readily available in the county. The future for history at Quilley now looks very exciting!

The ASTs focus principally on:

- preparing and delivering workshops at the network meetings and at county-wide training events
- researching the latest thinking in history teaching and learning
- co-editing and writing articles for the county history newsletter, *History matters*
- producing 'deluxe' history lessons
- providing intervention support for specific teachers as directed by the county's history inspector/adviser.

Impact example: 'deluxe' lessons

'Deluxe' lessons are, in the words of Sarah Herrity, one of the three ASTs and based at Wyvern Technology College, 'examples of outstanding lessons that have been created as a result of the steering group's thinking in recent years. They have been developed as part of our CPD provision for the challenge group, network meetings and annual conferences. As a result, they are the product of a thorough and systematic approach'.

Once a teacher has developed what they consider to be a highly effective lesson plan and resources, the lesson is observed by one of the ASTs. Amendments are made as required and the lesson structure is polished so that it can be easily adapted for use by other teachers. The next stage is for it to be showcased at a network meeting. Feedback is considered and only after this process of trialling and testing is the lesson written up for publication in the newsletter and for purchase from the History Curriculum Centre as a 'deluxe' lesson. As a result, teachers are aware that these lessons have been tested and improved. They have the Hampshire Secondary History Network's 'stamp of recommendation' as a lesson which works well and which provides an effective way of engaging students in answering a key enquiry question.

At the October 2012 Network Meeting, the ASTs and leading teachers modelled three lessons for the teachers present and all were well received. In the words of one teacher: 'Deluxe lessons are great because you know you will have a clear structure which you can easily adapt for your students'. Another teacher agreed and added that they are 'all backed up with great resources'. The three lessons showcased involved active enquiries following a series of mini questions to answer one overarching enquiry question. The enquires were:

- to what extent did JFK's assassination change the Civil Rights Movement?
- did the Gestapo really control people's lives?
- how far did Stresemann successfully rebuild Germany?

The ASTs work closely with seven leading history teachers in Hampshire. Together, they comprise the steering group. These teachers have been recognised as first-rate history teachers, having been observed teaching in their schools, having produced high-quality resources and having been involved successfully in different layers of the network. Their work is focused on:

- supporting the ASTs at the various training events
- showcasing successful lesson ideas at the network meetings
- writing articles for *History Matters*.

Impact example: *History matters*

The HIAS *History Matters* newsletter is a key publication which disseminates the latest best practice from across the county. Teachers value it greatly because it showcases what works well. The articles include teaching ideas which have been tried and checked before they are published. In that way, the ideas have credibility. The newsletter is published twice a year and circulated in hard copy to all the county's secondary schools. It is written by leading practitioners from across the local authority and contains a wealth of support and guidance from beyond the county as well as from within.

For example, edition 55 for Spring 2012 co-edited by Paul Barrett, one of the three ASTs and based at The Arnewood School, contained a dozen separate articles. They included examples of:

- good history provision based on lessons which had been observed, for example, the changing attitudes towards women before 1918
- advice on interdisciplinary learning in general and specifically on how to approach it when teaching the transatlantic slave trade
- using historical enquiry at Key Stage 4

- a structured approach to GCSE revision
- how to challenge gifted and talented learners
- hints and tips from a year in the life of an NQT
- guidance on the changes to the Ofsted inspection framework from January 2012.

In all, eight teachers from seven different schools contributed to the newsletter by disseminating what had worked well for them. One teacher new to the profession regarded the newsletter as 'essential reading'; whilst another more experienced colleague spoke of 'the breadth and depth of strategies which are covered'.

The steering group, together with the ASTs and the county inspector/adviser, meets three times a year to discuss concerns and the latest areas for development, share best practice and plan future training courses and workshops for teachers. The ASTs also have three separate meetings each year with the county's inspector/adviser to coordinate their activities. The emphasis at all times is on improving history by identifying and disseminating best practice.

The history network and associated training events

The network comprises of a number of different professional development opportunities for history teachers. They fit within a clear structure and offer appropriate support for individual teachers at different stages of their career or for departments according to their needs. For



Patricia Hannam, the network is 'highly successful' because the various training activities 'give an opportunity to deepen understanding of the enquiry methodology developed in Hampshire and there is considerable benefit from working with experienced and nationally recognised practitioners who form our county steering group'. The [12 principles of high-quality enquiry work](#) in history, for example, were drawn up by the history steering group with guidance from Neil Thompson

when he was the county inspector/adviser for history. They represent good practice; underpin the development work undertaken by the ASTs and the leading teachers; and have become integral to creating successful historical enquiries in Hampshire schools.

Impact example: network opportunities

All history teachers in secondary schools in Hampshire are able to access the following groups depending on their experience:

The **NQT Group** involves all history teachers in their first year of teaching. On three separate days, run by the history ASTs, the NQTs focus on key aspects of teaching and learning in history. For 2012/13, the principal emphasis is enquiry-led learning, inclusion and effective teaching at GCSE.

The **Challenge Group** is for teachers in their second and third years of teaching. It offers the opportunity to meet for three half-day sessions in an academic year to develop their understanding of good practice in teaching and learning in history through producing teaching resources on a specific historical theme. For 2012/13, the issue selected is, 'Making our curriculum truly British'.

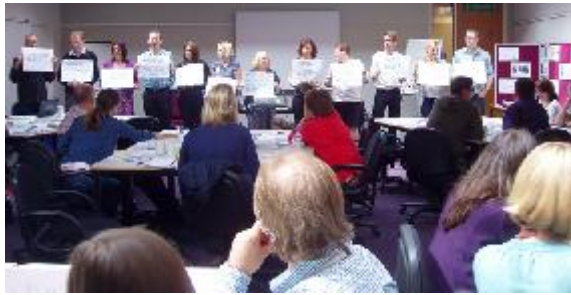
The **Development Group** is aimed at practitioners who feel that they have become a little out of touch with current trends and would appreciate the opportunity to work together with experienced colleagues to develop their classroom practice and ensure that their teaching is informed by current thinking in historical education.

The **New Heads of Department Group** gives those who are new to subject leadership a chance to work with the secondary history ASTs to explore how to establish an outstanding department by focusing on such issues as using data for a purpose, creating a rich curriculum, assessment and progression, self-evaluation, leading your department, and working with non-specialist teachers. Although this training is focused on one full day session in any one academic year, the AST team provides all-year round support and heads of department are able to be part of this group for more than a year.

The **County Network Meeting** is the key forum for history teachers from across the local authority to come together to access and share best practice. It brings together experienced and less experienced teachers and takes place three times a year. At each meeting successful lessons are demonstrated and examples of best practice are modelled. As a result, each session becomes an excellent training opportunity. At the meeting in October 2012, for example, over half of the history departments in Hampshire secondary schools were represented and for some schools more than one teacher attended. Such is the enthusiasm of the teachers to improve and the high regard in which the network meetings are held that attendance is always high and, as happened on this occasion, teachers invariably stay after the proceedings to discuss what they have learnt and how they might use the ideas back in their own schools. For 2012/13, the network sessions are focusing on 'Making GCSE motivating, memorable and meaningful'.

The **History Leadership Conference** organised through the Hampshire Teaching and Leadership College (HTLC) is the principal annual event for all those engaged in the leadership of history in the county. For Patricia Hannam, this is 'a must' for subject leaders or their representatives because the conference 'deals with the most significant issues at the moment', by, for example, bringing speakers of national importance to Hampshire who will 'help our teachers to inspire and engage their students'.

The History Curriculum Centre



The [History Curriculum Centre](#), based in Winchester, houses a library of resources, including textbooks and relevant journals, and collections of artefacts, all of which teachers can consult and borrow. There is also a meeting room which teachers can use as a venue for curriculum planning. The centre also produces and holds copies of a range of history resources for use at Key Stages 3 and 4 which

teachers can purchase. Devised by the ASTs and the leading teachers, these teaching materials are developed into a publishable format by the manager of the History Centre, to ensure that teachers in the county can access some of the latest thinking in history pedagogy.

Impact example: resource materials available from the History Curriculum Centre

Teaching materials cover all aspects of the development of students' thinking in history by focusing, for example, on enquiries which explore change and continuity, significance, interpretations, diversity and local history. These include:

- over 30 'deluxe' lessons such as, 'An exploration of the historical significance of William Wilberforce' for Key Stage 3 and 'How successful was the League of Nations?' for Key Stage 4
- ten 'extended enquiries' for Key Stage 3 which focus on, for example, local history through 'Was Eastleigh a typical railway town?' and personal motivation through, 'Why James Maley decided to join the International Brigade and fight fascism in the Spanish Civil War'.

The centre has its own dedicated staff and Barbara McFadyen, the current centre manager, is clear about the importance of the centre which she says, 'Is all about ensuring outstanding history in schools. Our resources have been tried and tested and we want all teachers to access what we have to support them in sustaining improvements in their teaching. We're also looking for new materials which we can test, produce and market. In the end it's about ensuring good history.'

Hampshire's Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS)

The ASTs and the leading teachers on the steering group spearhead the improvement work in history in the county. The various groups have been in place for several years and have the capacity to be self-sustaining. However, underpinning this broad approach



and providing essential coordination, quality assurance and strategic thinking is the local authority's Inspection and Advisory Service. For Patricia Hannam, HIAS provides essential organisational support and management to ensure that the network operates smoothly. However, it also undertakes a much more significant role.

HIAS ensures credibility for senior leaders by quality assuring the history network and the training it provides. Hampshire headteachers value, respect and trust the history network. As a result, they regard membership of the history steering group as prestigious and continue to release history teachers to be members of that group. This helps to ensure that the network draws on the best practitioners and has the capacity to undertake its broad portfolio of activities, as well as focusing on developing first-rate subject teaching and leadership in history across the county.



Alongside the inspector/adviser for history, is a large support system and the secondary history network is part of the strategic planning for school improvement in the county. As a result, and at the instigation of the inspector/adviser, history ASTs, recruited from among the best practitioners, are used to support individual schools and teachers. The partnership between HIAS, headteachers and the members of the history steering group is based on the recognition that support for a self-sustaining subject improvement strategy is a highly effective way of improving teaching and learning in history.

Impact of the network

The impact of the secondary history network is best demonstrated through its work with teachers and its continued existence. HIAS, headteachers, current ASTs and other members of the steering group are all committed to ensuring that arrangements allow the work of the network to continue and flourish. This is because the support provided has helped secure improvements in history in schools across the county.

Impact example: Wyvern Technology College

For Alan Newton, headteacher, the history network is a mature and sustainable model. 'Whereas high quality subject in-service training is struggling in some subjects, in history it is thriving', he says. 'In this school history is a flagship department and there is great strength in leadership and in classroom practice. And much of this success is to be explained by the existence and work of the network'. Alan Newton is clear that the network has made a difference to history at Wyvern because 'it provides fantastic intellectual stimulation alongside practical approaches to teaching and learning'. It is this combination of academic debate and pragmatic strategies which helps to ensure that history is a popular and successful subject in the school. The excellent practice in history is used as a catalyst to improve teaching in other subjects and history teachers are used as part of the whole-school improvement work.

Sarah Herrity, one of the ASTs and based at Wyvern, is currently working to help stimulate and refresh the programme to develop literacy across the curriculum and leads a group of ASTs and heads of subject in developing outstanding teaching.

For all the teachers of history at this school, the network is vital. As Sam Jupe, one of the history teachers says: 'You come away from the meetings feeling inspired and wanting to try the ideas. And I have and they work!' She adds, though, that 'you cannot just copy the ideas. You have to adjust them for your context. But that's good teaching anyway, isn't it?'

Laura Dowd, the history subject leader, is emphatic: 'Our improving results are due to first-rate teaching and what keeps us all buzzing is the network. You cannot underestimate its importance in getting us all to reflect on what we do and how we do it'. For her, the network has helped improve history teaching in four key ways:

- by providing a link to the national picture through the dissemination of what is happening outside the county
- by providing a forum for sharing good practice and for modelling first-rate teaching based on well-structured enquires
- by ensuring departments meet statutory requirements
- by providing opportunities to discuss with colleagues how they teach topics of common interest.

For the history teachers at Wyvern, the network has helped them to develop an enquiry-led approach to their teaching which has become embedded in their practice. This emphasis upon historical enquiry underpins the department's [manifesto](#). 'The focus upon enquiry flows through our lesson planning, our teaching, our discussions and our philosophy' says Laura. 'Long may the network continue'.

Impact example: Testwood Sports College

At Testwood Sports College, history is one of the strongest departments, having been in the words of Ian Appleton, headteacher, 'in a most unfavourable position for many years. But now it is popular and effective and students of all abilities are choosing to do it at GCSE'. This rapid change of fortune is the work of a dedicated team of teachers, led by a highly capable head of department. All the teachers have benefited from the network but none more so than Tamsin Leyman, the current subject leader.

Tamsin joined Testwood seven years ago as an NQT, was soon appointed as head of history and is now also head of humanities. She puts down much of her success and the achievements of history in the school to her involvement with the network. Her ideas have been shaped by her work over time with the NQT group, the challenge group, the network meetings and the new to subject leadership group. All of these experiences have given her access to new teaching ideas and, in her words, to 'inspiring colleagues'. As a result, the collaborative approach taken across the county underpins the department's approach. So all the history teachers as a matter of course share best practice. For Catherine Patten, one of the history team, the network helps you 'see the wood from the trees and it gives you the confidence to try something different'. Tamsin agrees and stresses how much the network influences both thinking and practice. For her the links forged through the network at all its levels, 'are inspirational and essential. History teaching in this school and, I am sure, throughout the county, is enriched by the individuals who make up the network'.

The network in Hampshire is successfully providing support and guidance for teachers of history at all stages of their careers and whatever their level of experience and expertise. It



is a highly effective partnership between enthusiastic ASTs, leading teachers, headteachers and the local authority; and based on a clear belief that the county has expertise which can and should be used to support other schools. In the words of Paul Barrett: 'It is about helping each other to bring about rigorous and engaging history teaching in all classrooms'. In *History for all*, its latest report on history in primary and secondary schools, Ofsted recommended that all history departments should 'develop formal and informal networks, clusters and federations to provide greater opportunities for teachers of history to work together on subject-specific training'. The Hampshire Secondary History Network is a first-rate example of how this can be accomplished.

The future

The Hampshire Secondary History Network will continue following the ending of the national AST programme. HIAS is supporting the appointment of a Hampshire Leading Teacher (HLT) in history to work alongside the county inspector/adviser for RE and history. As part of the service to schools, the HLT will focus on developing the former AST role in relation to the history network. This will ensure that the steering group retains its capacity to support,

model and disseminate best practice in teaching and learning in history in the county's secondary schools.

Provider's background

The [Hampshire Secondary History Network](#) has been in operation for just under 10 years. The aim of the network is to develop and spread best practice in history in all of the county's secondary schools. It is led by a small group of history ASTs, aided by a steering group of history subject leaders and teachers, and supported by the local authority. History teachers in Hampshire can also access the History Curriculum Centre which is situated in Winchester and which provides and publishes history teaching packs and resources.

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch.