



case study

Knowle Primary simplifies whole school improvement with *schoolcentre.net*

Knowle Primary in Plymouth enjoys the support of an enthusiastic school community and this has been a key factor in its ability to drive whole school improvement. Attended by 274 four to 11-year-olds, Knowle serves one of the more deprived areas in the region and many of the children join the school with achievement levels below the national average.

fact file

Knowle Primary is attended by 274 four to 11-year-olds and is one of 107 schools served by Plymouth City Council. The school offers its pupils a wide range of learning opportunities inside and outside the school day and it is the first choice for many parents who live in the area.

schoolcentre.net is an online self-evaluation system, which enables headteachers to store their school development plans electronically, delegate actions to designated staff and monitor the progress of the school easily over time. It is part of The Skills Factory's range of solutions to help schools work more efficiently and drive whole-school improvement.

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The school’s leadership, teachers and governors have worked hard to raise standards of teaching and learning and *schoolcentre.net*, Granada Learning’s online school self-evaluation solution, has helped make this a much simpler task.

The Self-evaluation Form (SEF) is a vital part of Ofsted’s school inspection process and it helps schools assess the ongoing effectiveness of their education provision. Headteacher, Judy Milford, wanted this document to become a central focus for whole school discussions on the future development of Knowle Primary. This would strengthen the school community and help drive improvements in teaching and learning to boost pupils’ achievement. However, making sure all those involved in school improvement planning had up-to-date photocopies of the SEF and other supporting documents was expensive and time-consuming.

Judy Milford says: “The introduction of *schoolcentre.net* in January 2007 transformed our school improvement process and eased the burden of administration on teaching and non-teaching staff. School staff, governors and school improvement partners can simply log on to the website using a secure password and access an up-to-date copy of the SEF online. They can also view a range of supporting evidence which we store on the system, such as information on pupil progress and details of learning intervention strategies.”

The school’s SEF is updated regularly online so that the most current version is always available to those who need it. The form can also be automatically uploaded to the Ofsted website so that it can be

accessed by inspectors prior to their arrival on inspection day.

A key advantage of using *schoolcentre.net* is that a teacher or governor could log on from inside or outside school and find out what action is being taken to meet the requirements of the Every Child Matters, for example. School Improvement Partners at Plymouth local authority can also view the latest parental questionnaire or access information on how a particular teaching strategy has contributed positively to pupils’ progress. This enables the whole school community to work more efficiently as they do not have to spend time calling school office staff or searching through files to find the data they need.

Another way in which *schoolcentre.net* has helped drive improvement at Knowle is in the implementation of the school development plan. Managing the level of change taking place in the school is a complex process and there are many plans in place to enhance pupils’ learning. With *schoolcentre.net*, the leadership team can assign action points to a specific teacher or staff member and monitor the short and long-term progress of the school easily over time. Individuals can see which actions are completed and which are still outstanding and this has been helpful in ensuring workloads are managed effectively.

“schoolcentre.net has played a key role in providing a clear picture of teaching and learning at Knowle. The system is so easy to use and we can tailor it to our school’s specific needs. It is a fundamental part of how we support school improvement and I don’t know how we would function without it,” says Judy Milford.

Knowle Primary is just one of the schools that has benefited from using *schoolcentre.net* in Plymouth. Following a successful pilot, the system was introduced in 43 schools across the region.

Simon Wright, E-Learning Resources Manager at Plymouth City Council says: “We wanted to support schools across the region in their dedication to raising pupil achievement but we didn’t want to bombard them with complicated technology that would require a considerable training commitment. *schoolcentre.net* stands out from other products on the market. The system is incredibly flexible and well designed so

that it is simple for technical and non-technical staff to use with little training.”

Plymouth has found that since the implementation of *schoolcentre.net*, schools in the area work more collaboratively and share good practice to encourage pupils’ progress. To support this, the authority plans to set up a number of drop-in sessions where school leaders can meet to discuss school improvement issues and swap ideas on how to make the most effective use of *schoolcentre.net* in their schools.

Authority staff work closely with their colleagues at Granada Learning to ensure *schoolcentre.net* is rolled out smoothly and the system is set up to suit the individual requirements of each school. This relationship will continue as those requirements evolve to meet the changing needs of pupils in Plymouth so that each child gets the support they need to reach their full potential.

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Benefits:

- Provides direct links between SEF and School Development Plan
- Stores all documents and evidence in one place
- Ensures a school is in a continual state of readiness for an Ofsted inspection
- Can be accessed by entire school community
- Uploads SEF directly to Ofsted website
- Provides a secure area for CPD

contacts

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