



case study

Loxley Primary brings whole school together with *schoolcentre.net*

schoolcentre.net is an online self-evaluation, evidence gathering and school improvement tool that is used by thousands of UK schools. This case study looks at how Loxley Primary in South Yorkshire is using the tool to help staff work more closely together.

Loxley Primary School

Located in a semi-rural setting on the outskirts of Sheffield, Loxley Primary is attended by 210 four to 11-year-olds.

fact file

The Skills Factory aims to relieve the administrative burden on school management teams and teachers. Its most popular resource is *schoolcentre.net* – an online self-evaluation, evidence gathering and school improvement tool. The company is part of the Granada Learning Group.

case study

"The introduction of *schoolcentre.net* at Loxley has changed the way we approach whole-school improvement and made it easier for us to respond to changing priorities within the school."

Located in a semi-rural setting on the outskirts of Sheffield, Loxley Primary is attended by 210 four to 11-year-olds. The school's leadership team truly values the contribution both teaching and non-teaching staff can make in driving progress towards school development goals. Communication is a key part of life at Loxley and The Skills Factory's online self-evaluation service, *schoolcentre.net*, is helping to ensure the school is working as one to raise standards of teaching and learning.

schoolcentre.net was introduced at the school in 2006 following a successful local authority pilot involving 22 schools in the area. The system has helped cut administration time for all those involved in school improvement at Loxley and enabled staff with different areas of curriculum responsibility to work more closely together.

Loxley's school development plan and improvement priorities are discussed regularly at the school's termly staff meetings. Prior to the introduction of *schoolcentre.net*, staff would work from paper copies of the most recent plan and any changes or amendments would be made after the meeting. An updated version of the plan would then be printed off at the end of the school year and made available to those that needed it. However, this meant that the latest printed copy of the plan might not necessarily be up-to-date.

Headteacher, Jan Fletcher, explains, "We wanted to make sure that all the hard work we were doing throughout the year to raise pupils' achievement was included in our school development plan. But this would mean continually printing out new versions of the paper document, which would have been impractical and

expensive. With *schoolcentre.net*, we can store our school improvement information electronically and update it online as and when issues are addressed. This means that if we bring in a new style of teaching maths or introduce an initiative for boosting children's ICT skills, details of these are available to governors and parents much more quickly and our school development plan is always kept up to date."

Jan can now display Loxley's online school improvement plan on a whiteboard during staff meetings. She has found that this has encouraged staff to become more actively involved in discussions on the future direction of the school and enabled them to see the impact of changes across the school more clearly. Teachers also tend to work more closely together. The literacy coordinator will chat through ideas for boosting children's reading skills with nursery staff, for example, to ensure any changes to the current strategy benefit the whole school.

The *schoolcentre.net* system also frees teachers to work from wherever is most convenient for them, whether inside or outside school.

"If a teacher is working from home they can log-in to *schoolcentre.net* and see what action points they need to complete or update any information directly onto the system," says Jan. "This saves time and allows them to focus on providing good teaching and learning to pupils when they are in school."

Another advantage of *schoolcentre.net* is that it can be used as a central store for the self-evaluation form, individual policies and a range of other documents and evidence relating to school improvement. This can be particularly useful when the time comes for the school inspection. Schools can set up a secure log-in for Ofsted inspectors so that they can view the child protection strategy perhaps, or see what improvements have been made to enhance teaching and learning in maths, before they even arrive at the school.

Storing the school's information online and in one place saves time when a new teacher or governor joins the school. They can log straight on to *schoolcentre.net* to access documents relevant to their role, reducing the need for paper copies of information to be kept in files that could get lost or damaged.

As part of the Yorkshire Triangle Network Learning Community, Loxley works closely with many other schools and has built strong relationships with a number of heads and teachers in the area. Many of them have their own secure log in to Loxley's *schoolcentre.net* system. This has made it easier for Loxley to share ideas and best practice with their partners online, helping improve standards of teaching and learning for children across the region.

"*schoolcentre.net* is so easy-to-use and the training and support we have received from The Skills Factory has been excellent. We plan to increase the amount of information we are gathering on the system and make greater use of the facility to store digital images of the school and the projects pupils are working on. This will make it easier for us to demonstrate the good progress we are making."

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Benefits:

- Provides direct links between SEF and School Improvement Plan
- Stores all documents and evidence in one, secure 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

contacts

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