

Apprenticeship Learners Focus Group

WomenEd

16th November 2021

Background

In order to develop our apprenticeship offer to learners and ensure we meet their needs going forward, as well as to discover our impact on learners, we scheduled a focus group with employers in November 2021.

We had 11 attendees on 16th November 2021.

We asked 4 questions:

- What have you found to be the most helpful or the most positive thing about your experience on the programme?
- What examples have you got of the impact of our programmes on your organisation?
- What would you like to see improve on the programme?
- What do you think is missing from our provision, as an employer?

Attending For NCE:

- Rachel O'Halleron
- Ben Barton
- Ruth Gilbert
- Andy Greene

Level 7 Learners:

- Julie Stewart, Assistant Head
- Emma Hunstan, Deputy Head
- Michelle Whittlestone, Key Stage Lead
- Jacqueline Job, Headteacher
- Debbie Campbell, Deputy Head
- Christine Bellchambers, SBM
- Kathryn Yiannadji, Deputy Head
- Rachelle Pennock, Assistant Head
- Lyndsay Bawden, Trust Lead Eng
- Amanda Doherty, Assistant Head
- Joy Buckley. Head of Dept

Roundtable Summary

What have you found to be the most helpful or the most positive thing about your experience on the programme?:

- Being part of a specific network within the NCE programme. Support across a wide range of roles and schools within that network
- Access to a wide range of high level expertise.
- Extensive support from the NCE.
- Ability to develop resilience in a supportive environment
- Experience and information about leadership outside of education.
- Sharing knowledge and experience across the group.
- Ability to take the knowledge and experience from the course and apply across areas of work and life.
- In particular understanding of strategy from an academic and practical perspective.
- Better understanding of systems leadership and how to avoid working in a silo.

What would you like to see improve on the programme?:

- More support around the apprenticeship side of things.
- Better technical support for Canvas/Ebsco etc.
- More live events (Covid permitting)
- The apprenticeship side is very admin heavy.
- The Off the Job Training side is complex and long-winded (but also what are the 'rules' about OTJ: does it need signing off/witnessing/etc? Not clear)
- Challenges with OneFile
- Pointing people more clearly to support – cf Carole Laker
- Would have liked more support on the apprenticeship up front.
- Comms can be overwhelming – too many emails!
- Masters marking was seen as too focused on references.
- Not clear how OTJ links to progress.

What impact has the programme had on you and your organisation?:

- Improved communication from me across our whole organisation (especially on communicating change)
- One of the key reasons I got my new job.
- Encouraging our teams to focus on psychological safety and providing space for people to grow and remain positive.
- Better knowledge in me and across my organisation on finance.
- Using language to better communicate across the MAT.
- More confident (x6)
- Got a promotion.
- Using the language of strategic planning, PESTLE etc to explain to senior leaders how we move forward.
- It's given me the tools to set up things that don't rely on me being there. Getting processes in place.
- Understanding the language of leadership.
- Sharing the learning across staff in school and in staff meetings has been useful.
- Better tools for implementing change.
- Giving me the licence/confidence to press ahead with my own leadership style and take on opportunities (like leading CPD across the school)
- Thinking more carefully about leading my team
- Becoming a strategic leader within my school
- Having regular checkpoints on the course have allowed me to manage and be aware of my progress and that of my school.

What do you think is missing from our provision?:

- Face to face sessions
- More support for the first essay/assessment task – talking about it informally first.
- More informal networking sessions
- More coaching opportunities (to be coached)
- More access to academic team
- Some of the core texts as actual books provided on the course.
- A pre-reading list for each module.
- More details about the Alumni offer.
- Opportunity to revisit modules towards the end of the programme.
- Start earlier and know more about the alumni

Recommendation and Actions:

- More academic support
- Alumni needs baking in at beginning of year 2
- Face-to-face sessions need to return asap
- Coaching support for leaders
- Opportunities to network