

The Sydney Russell School becomes OLEVI's latest Designated Centre of Excellence

We are delighted and proud to announce the appointment of The Sydney Russell School as our latest Designated OLEVI Centre of Excellence.

Congratulations to this Outstanding, All-Through School in Dagenham, East London. The school has achieved its DOC status through working with OLEVI for many years and showcasing the very best in teaching and learning, leadership and coaching.

Sydney Russell is a very special place. Buzzing with excitement, this school community is credible, dynamic, aspirational, happy and successful. It is united by a common commitment to providing its students with the currency, character and culture to be truly inspired and achieve great things.

Central to achieving this vision has been Sydney Russell's partnership with OLEVI. Its leaders fully embrace and role model DR ICE principles and the OLEVI ethos throughout the school. It has developed a deeper understanding of the different OLEVI models and approaches, and their effective and innovative use is evident through the phenomenal impact achieved.

Hearing the emotional stories of their journey and how the programmes have transformed colleagues' confidence and competence was truly inspirational. As a



"We are delighted to have become a Designated OLEVI Centre! Our relationship with OLEVI continues to deepen our thinking about teaching, leadership and coaching – DR ICE is at the core of what we do as a school. We are excited to look towards our future at Sydney Russell School, with OLEVI, centring on empowerment and growth of our learning community."



Clare Cross, Vice Principal, The Sydney Russell School

result, the school is a passionate advocate for OLEVI and is ready, able and willing to open its doors to inspire others.

As a DOC, Sydney Russell has become part of our extended Leadership Team, providing focus, challenge and innovative

thinking that will shape and re-shape the OLEVI Alliance in the years to come.

Thank you to Clare, Janis, Amy and the team for your commitment and dedication. We look forward to sharing your future successes with the alliance. ■

Celebrating the OLEVI Alliance

Hearing of the impact and value individual teachers, support staff and leaders of education bring to creating exceptional learning environments, and knowing we have been part of that journey, is humbling and inspiring.

Your stories inspire us to push ever further forward in professionalising the profession and driving through cultural change. They have also been pivotal in our reflections of how best to capture what makes our Alliance so impactful.

Out of this challenge has come our new mission statement, shown right. We hope you'll agree that the strength of our community is that we are not afraid to push the boundaries



The OLEVI Alliance
Creating High Performing People

The OLEVI Alliance creates high performing people who professionalise the profession by valuing a growth culture.

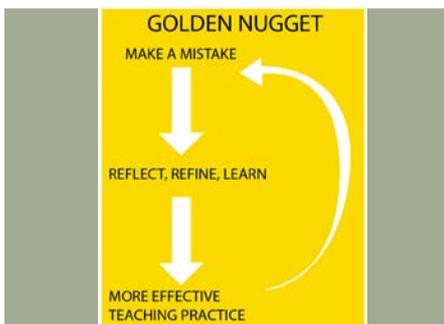
to be the best we can be, and strive continually to improve and innovate to provide great teaching for our children and young people. We are proud of our Alliance and look forward to being part of your ongoing journey. ■

Why we talk about Golden Nuggets?

Ashley Bartlett talks about the language of 'Golden Nuggets' and its power in encouraging reflective teaching practice.

Earlier this year we were delighted to welcome senior leaders from across the Leicestershire Secondary SCITT Partnership for the opportunity to meet our current trainees. Not only did the senior leaders appreciate the offer of tea and cake as a brief respite from their busy roles, but they also had the chance to network and make links with our trainees.

Trainees took the opportunity to reflect on their experience thus far, sharing with senior leaders their 'Golden Nugget' (an OLEVI model embedded in our delivery) from their practice to date. Strict parameters of one minute and only one PowerPoint slide (example below) resulted in fantastically focused presentations.



Reflections were broad and insightful, covering topics as wide-ranging as the importance of classroom routine, the power of questioning, modelling and interleaving. Senior leaders praised the reflectiveness of the trainees at this early stage in their training, and the cohort benefited from hearing of the experiences of their peers.

Both trainees and experienced teachers took away ideas to trial in their own classrooms and made useful connections within the profession.

We were even more delighted when our trainees returned to meet senior leaders for 'mock interviews' the following term and hear them still using the language of 'Golden Nuggets'. One senior leader, who had not been present at the October meeting, asked: "Why do your trainees speak consistently of 'Golden Nuggets'?" Our response: "Because that's the power of an OLEVI model in encouraging reflective practitioners!" ■

Coaching at the heart of everything we do

Castle Academy share their school's journey to improvement – from being judged 'Inadequate' to becoming 'Good' – and how their focus on putting coaching at the heart of everything has been instrumental in the school's progress and success.

Why were we drawn to OLEVI?

Our relationship with OLEVI started in 2014. The school had just been judged 'Inadequate', and the school was in the process of converting to an academy. Initially, OLEVI facilitated a visioning day for the new leadership team, helping us to unpick and clarify the academy's vision. From this a coaching relationship developed between the two organisations, with a focus on improvement in teaching and learning.

The professional development offered through the OLEVI Teaching & Learning, Leadership and Coaching (TLC) suite of programmes gave all our staff members the opportunity to improve and grow their own practice, whilst uniting the team around a common understanding of what good looked like and how it could be achieved.

All staff were introduced to key models, such as the TLC model and DR ICE. Strong teachers engaged with the Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP), with leaders receiving coaching. DR ICE became the shared language, not only used as a format for driving improvements but also judging impact and setting targets for individuals.

Opportunities were given for all teachers to complete regular ward rounds to develop an open and collaborative learning culture. Our strongest teachers then went on to become trained facilitators of the OLEVI teaching programmes, ensuring all staff members received continuously professional development around the key models from the programmes.

The OLEVI coaching approach has given the school the models and tools to continually drive improvement in teaching and learning. More importantly, it has created a growth mindset within

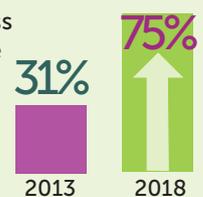
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THE PROVEN IMPACT

Raised Standards

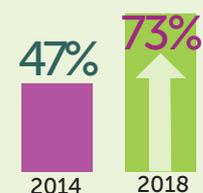
"When the relationship started in 2014 the school had been judged Inadequate. When re-inspected in 2016 the school received a judgement of Good." 

▲ Results across the school have improved to be in line or better than national.



EYFS has improved from 31% (2013), achieving a GLD to 75% (2018).

▲ KS2 results improved from 47% combined (2014) to 73% (2018),



with progress measures in the top 10%. 

▲ Disadvantaged pupils are broadly in line with or outperforming other pupils achieving the expected standard or above in their year groups. 

Teacher Development

The CPD and development opportunities are valued by our staff, with many of our Middle Leaders having been promoted from within the school. 

▲ A number of our teachers were initially teaching assistants who were offered the chance to gain QTS through the culture of continuous improvement and development that is now embedded in the school.

▲ Applicants for positions are attracted by the opportunities on offer and the drive for excellence in our profession.

OTP PLUS: Helping to professionalise the profession

Paul Day, Leading Practitioner for Teacher Development, Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, reflects on the value and impact the OTP PLUS programme has on driving forward a self-sustaining growth culture.

To further 'grow the top' and develop a culture of excellence in our school, and the schools we work with, there needed to be a focus on self-sustained growth within ever cost-conscious times.

The OTP PLUS has been an essential step in the development of our very best staff, as well as spreading the impact they can have on the development of others. The programme has given us the vehicle to appropriately equip our staff with the knowledge and skills that will feed this self-sustained development through the explicit focus on each part of the Teaching & Learning, Leadership and Coaching (TLC) model throughout the programme.

Initial conversations around the 'upwards convergence' model allowed us, as a school, to accurately identify who our top-line teachers were, and to think strategically who was in the best position to really grow their practice, and maximise impact for other staff and the whole school.

The framework and content of the OTP PLUS has allowed us to explore highly nuanced aspects of teaching and learning that have a huge impact on how all people learn. To this extent, having the right people in the room has been essential, and this careful consideration as to who would be part of the programme has had a



“The themes of the sessions within the OTP PLUS are relevant to schools now and will have a great impact on the direction of schools in the future.”

huge impact on the success of the overall learning for our delegates.

Expanding Coaching Skills

The impact on the delegates of the OTP PLUS programme has been to expand their coaching skills so that they can then lead these highly impactful areas back in their schools. This explicit leadership focus has allowed our delegates to grow in all areas of the TLC model, even more so than the OTP. Indeed, by involving the delegates in the selection of their own 'learning threes'

based on the 'upwards convergence' model, this aspect of leadership is present from the start and is a common theme throughout the programme.

The OTP PLUS itself is highly conceptual, including aspects of metacognition and mastery. But usable and readily applicable models allow all delegates to grow their understanding about how these complex areas of teaching and learning can be readily applied to their own teaching, and then shared with others to maximise the impact of this learning.

The explicit understanding that the learning the delegates are exposed to, and are generating, will be shared and developed by other staff, ensures that they go through highly complex thought processes. This ensures that the concepts discussed and developed can be explained simplistically

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How OLEVI changed my mind about CPD

We'd been here before, or so we thought. OTP delegate Sarah Butler, Newham Sixth Form College, reflects on her personal professional development journey with OLEVI and how it changed her mind about the impact and effectiveness of CPD.

On hearing that we were to get some professional development through the Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP), our collective thoughts turned to: Did we really need another prescriptive training course, being told what outstanding looks like under whichever current government

fad, phase or initiative might be in vogue? We collectively rolled our eyes at the idea of yet another career-hungry, overly assertive 'outstanding' teacher telling us what works for them and expecting us to do the same. We worried we didn't have the time, amid marking deadlines, data drops, lesson planning and meetings, to fit in more vaguely helpful CPD. We were sceptical, and a little more jaded than we would like to admit.

So, our journey began. We met in our glass-walled space, a group of teachers and tutors of varying experience and style. We delved deeper week by week into the nuts and bolts of

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our practice, we unpacked a professional toolkit that we hadn't had the time to visit reflectively for what felt like years. We talked at length in a calm space, sharing, enquiring, laughing and connecting.

It's only looking back that I see how quietly, confidently and profoundly we were coached, and how we were in desperate need of that space to be held for us. To nurture us, to empower our growth. The coaching was almost invisible, but it was extraordinarily powerful. Each seemingly casual question came with genuine interest and led us from light discussion to deep reflection.

The energy in the room changed – from a cross section of excellent but tired teachers, to a dynamic of close, empathetic, beautifully collaborative professionals. We built each other up, we played devil's advocate, we shared ideas, constructed new narratives. We shared our visions for change, and discovered they were surprisingly similar.

The OTP sessions soon became the

highlight of my week, not simply another 'task' to squeeze in amongst the bureaucracy and paperwork, but a purposeful and productive gathering of minds.

When the time came, we walked comfortably, feeling welcome and invited, into our colleagues' classrooms, and gleaned ideas, perspective and inspiration without paperwork or pressure and, most importantly, without criticism or hierarchy.

We began to invite others into our classrooms. At first, purely for convenience, generally to provide cover whilst we nipped out to a learning walk, but the conversations happened nonetheless. We began to share, to support, to collaborate and to open our doors organically and without any management direction. The dialogue began to change. Teaching and learning was the headline not the footnote.

Our purpose was back on the agenda. Learning. Progress. Students. Ideas. Risk-taking. A breath of fresh air. ■

• Castle Academy: continued from page 2

the school which looks to embrace cultural change.

As our relationship has developed over the years, the shared vision of Castle and OLEVI has come to underpin the culture and ethos of our school, with all staff committed to their own self-development.

In 2018 we became an OLEVI Designated Centre of Excellence. An achievement of which we are very proud. We have opened our doors to other schools in order that we can share and learn from each other. The continuous challenge that this brings

“The relationship with OLEVI has been the single most effective tool in our school's improvement journey. Our relationship with OLEVI continues to grow and is as important to us now as it has ever been.”

Lorna Beard, Principal,
Castle Academy

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to others. This then empowers everyone in the learning three to apply the learning to their own contexts, irrespective of phase, subject or experience.

Empowering Highly Skilled Teachers

The impact so far has been to empower these highly skilled teachers even further, arming them with advanced conceptual knowledge to drive their own practice even further forwards. Over the longer term, we will be looking at the impact the OTP PLUS delegates are having on other colleagues and how they have made their development accessible to others. A key focus moving forwards will be the shift in default positions – what have all involved sought to protect, grow and achieve that they weren't aware of before?

Moreover, we will also be looking for our delegates to have a say on the direction of the teaching and learning policy and what they can contribute to the whole organisation to ensure that we all keep moving forwards. ■

What OTP PLUS delegates say:

“The OTP PLUS programme has provided me with a real focus on how to help me lead all staff in moving forwards.”

“The programme had excellent content and excellent group discussions which have allowed me to improve my processes in teaching, leadership and coaching.”

“The order of the sessions allowed me to link my ideas. Also, refreshing coaching and then applying it to new concepts has helped me hugely within my coaching skills.”

is welcomed by our staff and ensures that they maintain high expectations of themselves and their pupils.

What value would you place on having a relationship with OLEVI

“The relationship creates long-term, sustainable change and therefore the value should be measured against long-term improvement in pupils' education rather than a short-term intervention.

As a school we would argue: 'Are you so successful that you can afford not to consider an improved culture and ethos for your pupils?' ■