

# Departmental Culture and Ethos

## *Objectives:*

- To ensure mentors understand what is meant by culture and ethos.
- To ensure mentors know why culture and ethos is important in improving departments.
- To provide strategies to audit and evaluate the culture and ethos within a department.
- To consider appropriate strategies for making necessary improvements within the department.

## *Useful for:*

- Subject Leader Mentors carrying out the initial whole department audit/evaluation, interim audit/evaluation and summative audit/evaluation to measure improvement.
- Providing Subject Leader Mentors with information to write a Raising Attainment Plan for improving the department.
- Judging the sustainability of the improvement.

## *Organisation:*

The module will use a range of delivery/training strategies including whole group input, discussions, small group tasks and individual work.

Activity 8.1	What is Ethos and Culture?	OHT 8.1.1 and Handout 8.1A	5 mins.
Activity 8.2	Expectations of a Good Department	Task Sheet 8.2a Badges Flip chart and pens	45 mins.
Activity 8.3	The Importance of Culture and Ethos	OHT 8.3.1 x 2	15 mins.

Activity 8.4	Sources of Evidence to Find Out About Culture and Ethos	OHT 8.4.1 x 2 Handout 8.4A	45 mins.
Activity 8.5	Doing the Audit	Case Study for Audit 1 x 2 Task sheets 8.5a and 8.5b Handout 8.5A, 8.5B	60 mins.
Activity 8.6	Writing the Raising Attainment Plan	Handout 8.6A, 8.6B OHT 8.6.1, 8.6.2 x 3	40 mins.

**Activity 8.1:** **5 mins**

**What is ethos and culture?**

- Trainer presents the OFSTED criteria OHT 8.1.1 + handout/same

OHT 8.1.1
HANDOUT 8.1A

## OFSTED EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO CULTURE AND ETHOS

- General staff commitment to the achievement of high standards.
- Pupil and parent satisfaction.
- Good working relationships across the school/department.

## Activity 8.2:

45 mins

### Expectations of a good department

- Give out badges with names and subject specialisms on.
- Trainer presents task sheet.
- In groups with mixed subject specialism mentors complete Task 8.2a.
- Mentor groups feedback to whole group.
- Trainer logs responses and summarises.

TASK SHEET	8.2a
What would you expect to see in your first week in the department if there was:	
<i>Please record your response in no more than five points:</i>	
General staff commitment to the achievement of high standards:	
■	
■	
■	
■	
■	
Pupil and parent satisfaction:	
■	
■	
■	
■	
Good working relationships across the school:	
■	
■	
■	
■	

The importance of culture and ethos

- Trainer presents 14 reasons why culture and ethos is important in a department and must meet the OFSTED criteria. OHTs 8.3.1 + handout of OHT (10 minutes).
- Trainer asks mentors to add two reasons of their own to the handout (5 minutes).

HANDOUT 8.3A

### Fourteen reasons why the ethos and culture in a department must meet the OFSTED criteria:

Because:

1. Pupils have an entitlement to a good education.
2. Pupils have an entitlement to know what, how and when they are going to learn.
3. Pupils have an entitlement to know if they are succeeding.
4. Pupils have an entitlement to appropriate support to achieve success.
5. Teachers have a duty to maximise every child's learning potential.
6. Teachers have a duty to assess children's progress and ensure the information is shared with others.
7. Teachers have a duty to use the assessment information to inform children's future learning.

HANDOUT 8.3A

8. Parents have a right to know what their children should be attaining.
9. Parents have a right to know what children are learning.
10. Parents have a right to know how successful their children are.
11. Parents have a right to challenge the department if they consider their children are not successful in their learning.
12. Subject leaders have a duty to know what the standards of attainment are in their department and strive to improve them.
13. Subject leaders have a duty to know what the quality of teaching is in their department and strive to improve it.
14. Subject leaders have a responsibility to report this information to senior managers when it is requested.

## Activity 8.4:

45 mins

### Sources of evidence to find out about culture and ethos

- Trainer provides a list of sources of evidence OHT 8.4.
- Each source is written on a card and put in a hat. Mentors draw out up to three cards and prepare three bullet points on flip chart, stating how that could be used to provide information about culture and ethos. (20 minutes).

The trainer arranges for these to be typed up and distributed later.

HANDOUT 8.4A OHT 8.4.1

### Twenty Sources of Evidence

1. Department OFSTED report
2. Examination results
3. Teacher assessments
4. Marking in pupils' books
5. Pupils' work
6. Talking to teachers
7. Talking to pupils
8. Talking to senior managers
9. Scheme of work
10. Short-term lesson planning

HANDOUT 8.4A OHT 8.4.1

11. Departmental handbook
12. Record of CPD
13. Observation of teaching
14. Resources
15. Display
16. Accommodation
17. Ambience
18. School-based departmental reviews
19. Any subject-specific policies or references to department in whole-school documents
20. Departmental meeting minutes

#### Trainer note:

These 20 sources will need to be made up into 20 cards with one source typed onto each one for the task.

Doing the Audit

Trainer gives out Audit 1 of The Flossiemill School and makes clear that this is a first impression only. Mentors read the audit and complete Task 8.5a on Audit 1.

The trainer then gives out Audit 2 of The Flossiemill School and tells the mentors this is the additional evidence gleaned by the end of the second week in the school. By this time mentors will need to write an action plan. Mentors read Audit 2 and complete Task 8.5b on Audit 2.

Case Study Resource 8.5a

## The Flossiemill School Audit 1

**The Setting:**  
 The subject is an 11-16 secondary school of approximately 500 children with an in-school inclusion unit, which accepts some Y6 pupils from partner primary schools. The school is set in a semi rural area. The area has few facilities and little public transport is available. Consequently, the school could develop as a centre for community activity.

At one time the area was surrounded by mining industry and was a thriving community. Over the years the mining has gone leaving many unemployed. This now leaves a generally depressed area with the associated factors which this entails, including many cases reported of mental health identified by the Local Authority.

Some families have lived in the area all of their lives, others move in and out for various reasons, one of them being the isolation, but there is always housing available because of the above.

There are a high percentage of single parents, mostly women, and over 50% of the children receive free school meals. Drugs, alcohol and theft are also a problem, especially for the young.

Entering the area on a sunny Spring morning, one would never guess the underlying issues.

Case Study Resource 8.5a

**The School:**  
 The school has its own history. We will consider its journey over the last five years. The story begins when the school was on a split site. Both buildings were in need of great repair and redecoration. Staffing issues began to become a problem and the quality of teaching and discipline were issues to be addressed. The head had to take long-term sickness leave, followed by the deputy head and several members of the teaching staff. This left few permanent staff in a small school. More and more responsibility fell upon the governing body.

The LEA seconded a head from another school for a year to put some management back into the school. Another head was seconded for the next year, and by this time the original head had left through ill health. The school had now moved onto one site and refurbishment started to take place. During this time there were many changes in teaching staff until 20% were employed on a temporary basis. Four members of staff were still on long-term sickness leave.

Vast improvements were made to the building and policies began to be put in place. There were still many staffing issues and running alongside all of this was the fear of the parents about their children receiving a good education and possible closure of the school.

A third headteacher was now appointed permanently. During this time full support was being given by the LEA and governors with funding to the school to improve standards. The 'new' head started with some things in place and a lot of official and moral support.

**The Department:**  
 The substantive subject leader has now worked in the school for five years. He came to the school as an NQT and is the longest serving member of the department. Another teacher is on a temporary contract for one year, having been a subject leader in a successful inner-city school. There are two teachers on a job share, 0.5 each. They are both experienced teachers in their third year of service at this school, on the job share arrangement. The fourth member of the team is an NQT.

The subject area is located in the last part of the school to be refurbished. In the teaching block there are several empty classrooms. The area is often cold due to a faulty boiler which the governing body are unwilling to pay to have repaired due to the planned refurbishment. Because the block is a little isolated from the rest of the school, pupils frequently arrive late for lessons and other departments complain because pupils are often late from your lessons.

The new headteacher has suggested recently that the in-school unit might be relocated in the block as it is getting too large for its present accommodation.



**Activity 8.6:**

**40 mins**

**Writing the Raising Attainment Plan**

Trainer presents an agreed format for writing Raising Attainment Plans (RAP), with one piece of action already written and explains how this is completed, and provides some additional strategies.

Mentors complete (as far as they can in the time available) the RAP based on their identified key issues from school audit 2.

**Handout 8.6A**

Handout						8.6A
Target Area of Improvement		To ensure students know if they are succeeding in their learning		RAISING ATTAINMENT PLAN		
SUCCESS CRITERIA			EVALUATION			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students know what NC level they are working at in years 7-9 on their current performance.</li> <li>Students in year 10-11 know what GCSE grade they are likely to achieve on their current performance.</li> <li>Students know what they need to do in order to improve their performance.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion with students in years 7-9</li> <li>Discussion with students in year 10-11</li> </ul>			
Action	Lead Person	Start/End Date	Monitored by	Method of Monitoring	Resources/Finance/INSET	
Teachers must acquire a common understanding of the requirement of each level at N.C / GCSE	All teachers led by a subject leader	Written 2 weeks from start date	Subject Leader Mentor	Scrutiny of teachers record keeping	Departmental meeting time	

**Handout 8.6B**

Handout						8.6B
Target Area of Improvement		RAISING ATTAINMENT PLAN				
SUCCESS CRITERIA			EVALUATION			
Action	Lead Person	Start/End Date	Monitored by	Method of Monitoring	Resources/Finance/INSET	

## Some strategies for making necessary improvements to the ethos of the department

- Developing good systems of communication which are recorded and shared by all stakeholders in the department.
- Departmental meetings with timed agenda shared with teachers before meeting.
- Management meetings between subject leaders and senior managers.
- Questionnaire given to: pupils teachers parents
- Action planning based on audit of department shared with teachers, ensuring all members of the department are clear about future actions for improvement.
- Departmental council with pupils, teachers and parents where information and opinions shared.
- Developing good assessment strategies and tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress.
- Developing good record-keeping process.
- Setting up effective target setting processes informed by the data on pupils' performance.

- Learning objectives are identified and shared at the beginning of each lesson.
- Pupils have a learning plan for the term identifying what they will learn.
- Pupils are aware of their targets.
- Identifying clear protocols for monitoring the performance of pupils and teachers in the department and to relate these outcomes to continuing professional development.
- Developing opportunities for parents to have access to information on their children's attainment and future learning, e.g.  
Newsletters / Individual targets /  
Learning plans / Parents consultations
- Developing protocols for parents to challenge the progress of their children's learning.
- Celebrating pupils' achievement and attainment.
- Developing a code of conduct within the department, identifying relationships between:  
Pupil and pupil / Pupil and teacher /  
Teacher and teacher / Teacher and parent

# OFSTED EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO CULTURE AND ETHOS

- General staff commitment to the achievement of high standards.
- Pupil and parent satisfaction.
- Good working relationships across the school/department.

What would you expect to see in your first week in the department if there was:

*Please record your response in no more than five points:*

General staff commitment to the achievement of high standards:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Pupil and parent satisfaction:

- 
- 
- 
- 

Good working relationships across the school:

- 
- 
- 
-

# Fourteen reasons why the ethos and culture in a department must meet the OFSTED criteria:

Because:

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# The Flossiemill School

## Audit 1

### **The Setting:**

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The new headteacher has suggested recently that the in-school unit might be relocated in the block as it is getting too large for its present accommodation.



# Audit 2 Information

## The Flossiemill School

1. Classroom observation shows that:
  - The temporary teacher is a good teacher;
  - The subject leader is a satisfactory teacher who lacks flair and imagination;
  - The job share teachers have some skills but are disorganised in their classroom management;
  - The NQT lacks knowledge about procedure and protocol;
  - Pupils are not involved in their own learning.
  
2. Discussions with teachers show that:
  - The temporary teacher is unambitious for promotion or a permanent appointment in the school;
  - The subject leader feels undervalued, lacks confidence and feels threatened by the temporary teacher;
  - The job share teachers are frustrated by lack of opportunity to plan together;
  - The NQT feels unsupported

Overall the department has little understanding of issues relating to assessment and are concerned about the plans to move the in-school unit into 'their' block as they believe this will lead to additional supervision duties.

3. The pupils say they spent too much time in lessons listening to teachers.
  
4. The parents regularly complain about lack of discipline in the corridors of the departmental area.
  
5. The area is shabby and cold. Display is poor. As it is a long way from the staff room, teachers often do not leave at break. Pupils congregate in the area at break. The break supervisors rarely go into the block and teachers feel pressurised to supervise the area.



Target Area of Improvement	RAISING ATTAINMENT PLAN			
<p>To ensure students know if they are succeeding in their learning</p> <p><b>SUCCESS CRITERIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students know what NC level they are working at in years 7-9 on their current performance.</li> <li>• Students in year 10-11 know what GCSE grade they are likely to achieve on their current performance.</li> <li>• Students know what they need to do in order to improve their performance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EVALUATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with students in years 7-9</li> <li>• Discussion with students in year 10-11</li> </ul>	<p><b>Monitored by</b></p> <p>Subject Leader Mentor</p>	<p><b>Method of Monitoring</b></p> <p>Scrutiny of teachers record keeping</p>	<p><b>Resources/Finance/INSET</b></p> <p>Departmental meeting time</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Teachers must acquire a common understanding of the requirement of each level at N.C / GCSE</p>	<p><b>Start/End Date</b></p> <p>Written 2 weeks from start date</p>	<p><b>Lead Person</b></p> <p>All teachers led by a subject leader</p>		

Target Area of Improvement	RAISING ATTAINMENT PLAN
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SUCCESS CRITERIA	EVALUATION
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Action	Lead Person	Start/End Date	Monitored by	Method of Monitoring	Resources/Finance/INSET

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- Developing protocols for parents to challenge the progress of their children's learning.
- Celebrating pupils' achievement and attainment.
- Developing a code of conduct within the department, identifying relationships between:  
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