

**Meadowhead School**  
Academy Trust



# **Erasmus KA1 Staff Professional Development visit to Schools in Sweden (April 2019)**



**Staff participants:**

Jo Silverwood (Marketing/Communications Manager)  
Catherine Gutierrez & Sarah Hully (Maths Teachers)  
Ed Joel (Student engagement Manager)  
Rebecca Renshaw (MFL teacher)  
David Sheppard (English/Sixth form HOY)  
Anne Childs & Sadie Renwick (ADT teachers)  
Fran Morrell (Ethics teacher)  
Hala Ali & Alex Deal (ICT teachers)

## **Education system in Sweden**

Compulsory schooling from age 6-16

In 2018 Pre-school became compulsory and is Free (age 1-5) with a great emphasis on play/creative work

Grades 1-3 = Ages 7-10

Grades 4-6 = Ages 10-13

Grades 7-9 = Ages 13-16

Upper Secondary age 16-20 (All students are entitled to this if they complete compulsory schooling)

Education (inc H.E) and school dinners are free of charge.

**National tests** are taken in grades 3, 6, 9

3 = Maths and Swedish

6 = Maths, Swedish, English

9 = As above plus one Science, one social science – Civics, religion, Hist/Geog

## **PROGRESS DISCUSSIONS**

Take place once per term, and include the parent and teacher (like our parents' evening)

## **Attendance**

One Sixth Form College had a very simple way of explaining its attendance policy – using a hand with four fingers. Students could only miss four hours in a month or else intervention would occur.

**Action: Could we start using the phrase “more than one day a month” as the main way we explain our policy in meetings and to students/staff/parents?**

## **Enrichment**

No college had solved the challenge of making all students engage with enrichment (as well as academic/vocational) programmes.

However I did see a way of including a skills focus in our new enrichment policy from 2019. (D.Sheppard)

**Action: DSH to update enrichment proposals to include a focus on skills as well as core requirements.**

### **Phones, Devices & use of ICT**

In many schools students are given a tablet/laptop free of charge when they start school. ICT and their devices are used in many academic subjects daily.

Most students in Swedish School were allowed their phones during break times – We are not sure this worked that well! However, they did have a phone box/prison/crèche in most lessons we saw. DSH think this could work well for Sixth Form lessons.

**Action: DSH to explore costs and practicalities (theft?) of a similar system from September 2019. Possibly compulsory for new Y12s and teacher-optional for y13s.**

### **Zoning of Study Space**

One of the more affluent Sixth Form Colleges had some very impressive study facilities that prompted DSH to think about the communication of our study spaces. Do we communicate the rules and expectations of each area that well?

**Action: DSH to create a slide/diagram that outlines the different rules/expectations of each space. I was thinking I would use a traffic light system to group the spaces we have together.**

### **Use of Social Space / Break time activities**

Schools organised outdoor/indoor break/lunch time activities with help from older students and 'break time' supervisors (who wore high visibility jackets) and younger pupils chose what to engage with. Colleges with bigger cohorts did seem to use their social spaces for more activities – chess tournaments, student groups, and fundraising days/sales.

**Action: Sixth Form and student president team to think about any other ways we could use the social space.**

### **EAL students / integration**

There was a consistency in approach to EAL learners due to the large immigrant population in the authority of Järfälla. Students came from many countries and sometimes moved on again after a few years. Some arrive in their older teenage years too with little/no Swedish – Students are offered lots of additional support - often 2/3 extra support teachers in the classrooms.

We saw unity between teachers, which offered strength when teaching disaffected learners.

One school had a policy of keeping EAL students in smaller separate groups for the first few months (up to 12months) until their Swedish was sufficient to integrate into normal classes.

In some schools, two teachers were encouraged to mentor students that are more difficult and mentor simultaneously - like a two-pronged approach.

**ACTION: Talk to EAL lead more about the above to share ideas further**

### **Transition / Induction: How to study sessions**

One school spent the first 2-3 weeks of the academic year teaching students a 'how to study' programme of activities to ensure that they were ready to learn and were focussed for lessons and how to use their tablets/do homework etc. and research skills etc. from the start of their first year of school. Expectations were set – what teachers need from pupils and vice versa.

Great focus was placed on creating a calm classroom environment with 3 key foci – *Presence (attendance), Punctuality, and Behaviour* – to set the tone for a safe, calm and ready to work classroom environment.

They planned social events – how to act with each other, how to use the computer for study work, visits to Higher Ed/work places to encourage aspiration.

## **STEM enrichment (particularly girls)**

We visited Komtek – an LEA organisation supporting schools with technology, offering teacher training, loaning tech to schools, and running after school clubs for students aged 6-19.

[www.jarfalla.se/fritidochkultur/barnochunga/komtek.4.3d2db0a615cf3aa5f655cd4c.html](http://www.jarfalla.se/fritidochkultur/barnochunga/komtek.4.3d2db0a615cf3aa5f655cd4c.html)

We saw interesting examples of technology – Using themes and re-branding to try to encourage more girls to take classes and enrichment after school in Design Technology with the view that more women should take engineering courses.

One robotics/programming project was re-branded as ‘Train your pet’ purely to appeal to girls who liked the idea of making a ‘pet like’ cover (using felts/fur/cardboard) for the robot before programming it to perform certain commands!

**Action: STEM leaders could look at re-branding enrichment/clubs to encourage more girls into STEM activities/career pathways?**

## **Student responsibility**

There is consistent effort placed on student responsibility. Students are given responsibility for their use of technology, eg. Using a laptop in all of their lessons, use of mobile phones at break times. We also saw an example of students being responsible for setting the class goals for the year, which allows for greater ownership of them.

**Action: Allow for discussion with students to ask them for their goals/areas they want to work on at the start of new term. This worked well with my hard to engage Y10 class (S.Hully).**

## **Collaboration between colleagues/leaders**

There was a common held view of a “flat organisation” where all colleagues are relied on for the role they take and left to get on with this. There is a strong sense of collaboration and plenty of time taken (eg. Fika) to meet and share ideas and agree on

solutions/plans in a very democratic manner. Everyone's views are listened to and respected, regardless of position/experience – support staff, cleaners/caretakers as well as teachers. Heads and Deputies trust and rely on their staff to work collaboratively to get the job done.

**Action: As a whole school we should explore greater opportunities for staff collaboration or the sharing of ideas and expertise. We all learned a lot from our own colleagues on the trip – some of whom we hadn't ever had a conversation with prior to this trip! It's good to get to know your colleagues outside the normal school environment. You never know what great new ideas might develop!**

### **Engagement of students**

It was very encouraging to receive such positive feedback on what we are doing in the Meadowhead School Engagement Centre. They thought the model we have is excellent and definitely has potential to meet the needs of more students.

The advantages for working with the disengaged students was greater space and a high staff presence, which leads to a calm environment. Students could be separated and given their own area to work, away from other distractions.

They face very similar difficulties in getting a significant minority of students to engage with school. They do however have in place a next tier system, which removes the onus from the schools to work with non-attenders and passes responsibility on to the equivalent of our social services. (Ed Joel)

**Action – There is an urgent need for the EC to have more spaces available, both inside and outside.**

### **Early interventions for younger pupils**

There is a much greater focus on the younger years. Building in interventions from when they first start school at around six years of age (compulsory education begins age 6 in Sweden)

**Action – To develop interventions which target the younger students at Meadowhead, with the aim of reintegrating students after a fixed period of support. (Ed Joel)**

### **Alternative provision**

The use of practical and vocational courses as a means of engaging students was very well financed. The benefits were clearly visible with definite paths of progression into higher education.

**Action- To build in alternative curriculum placements for key students (Ed Joel)**

### **School dinners**

All pupils are entitled to free school meals in Sweden.

In some schools they had established a weekly 'mentor drop-in breakfast or lunch' led by older pupils and a staff mentor to support younger ones with any problems/issues (called Pastoral mentor group) They held this in the café offering breakfast items and 'chat' before school on Thursdays.

School dinners were offered free to staff to IF they were prepared to eat with the students in the canteen to 'get to know them' better as people, build relationships and break down barriers outside the classroom environment.

**Action: perhaps we could make the system in school automated so that pupils don't need to tell staff on the tills that they are FSM. (NB this may already be a work in progress for 2020?) This would also discourage more pupils from spending dinner money on crisps**

**and sweets out of school. Could we offer some key staff free dinners if they agreed to eat with the pupils in Meadowhead once a week?**

### **General observations**

- that the education system in the UK has been recently privatised so that schools and teachers can feel competitive with each other, and that we sometimes need to remember that we are all working towards the same aim, and we need to work together
- that we are doing really well to get the standard of education our pupils achieve
- that our behaviour is better and this our outcomes are higher for the pupils in our country
- having core values in the classroom works well.
- using technology around school to promote education
- using project as whole to promote coding for girls
- the importance of teacher student relationship in promoting good education and using technology to promote learning also respecting school properties
- Free school meals for all in order to make sure students have a good nutritious meal at least once a day, sharing responsibilities and respect
- having a goal and making sure whole school work towards it by making everyone in school work collaboratively  
student and staff well-being was very important to senior leaders (FIKA breaks are encouraged a lot to collaborate, debate, share/solve problems and get to know colleagues! Teaching staff can find themselves isolated in such a big school, it is really important that we all talk and work together.
- Pedagogical promenades- a good way to wake students up and engaged in the next (part of the) lesson.
- Swedish students are responsible for getting their grades-not the teachers.-What a great idea!