

PQH (NI) – Lessons Learned

Why this report?

PQH (NI) has recently changed the format of its Application Form in order to comply with the licence from the National College. In order to support applicants with this application form PQH (NI) has compiled this exemplar document.

This report is on lessons learned from both previous NPQH and PQH (NI) cohorts. Please read this report in conjunction with the Application Pack for Cohort 17.

How many applicants were successful in Cohort 16 in Northern Ireland?

A total of 157 people applied for PQH (NI) in Cohort 16 and of this number, 92 were successful.

How does the success rate vary by Key Area of headship?

You will note from your reading of the Application Pack you need to show in your best example for each key area, evidence which demonstrates strategic leadership and measurable achievement in all 6 of the Key areas of Headship. The Key Areas which proved to be most challenging were Key Area 5 (Securing Accountability) and Key Area 6 (Strengthening Community). The examples used below will give support particularly for these Key Areas. The highest success rate was in Key Area 2 (Leading Learning and Teaching).

What features indicate success in Key Areas?

Successful applications share common features-

- Clarity, focus and succinctness in presenting the best example for each key area, and why action was necessary.
- Clear description of the applicant's unique role in achievement in that example with quantifiable evidence of impact, particularly in Key Areas 1, 2, 4 and 5.

For example, to address Key Area 5, Securing Accountability, you should focus on steps you personally have taken to "hold yourself and others accountable for high standards of performance and behaviour and taken effective action for sustainable school improvement." and how you know you have made a positive difference.

Here are some extracts from a successful application, Key Area 5- Securing Accountability. These are NPQH examples, however, the message is the same.

My best example of leading at whole school/organisation level for Securing Accountability:

Summary: *As SLT member responsible for Data, I have developed both a Departmental Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) and a system of results analysis covering both attainment measures (e.g. % A*-C) and achievement measures (gap analysis of results vs. Fischer Family Trust Band D [FFT-D] grade estimates).*

My role: *In June 2011 I identified, through a comprehensive review of practice at the school, that there was a need for more detailed departmental results analysis, specifically*

focused on the key measure of pupil achievement: progress vs. FFT-D aspirational estimated GCSE grades. I proposed a system for results analysis based on reporting % A-C, A*-G and FFT-D gap per entry for subject areas which was agreed by the governors and piloted for GCSE results analysis in September 2009. An analysis report to staff and governors showed outcomes including the FFT-D gap analysis and indicated comparative departmental success. This enabled subject leaders to be accountable for results. The individual class breakdowns enabled both positive and negative judgements to be made about long-term teaching quality. In September 2010, the results analysis was integrated into the Department SEF process, and SLs commented on both pupil attainment (A*-C/G data) and achievement (FFT-D gap analysis). I analysed departmental improvement or decline, and added this information to both the school SEF and Raising Attainment Plan, leading to identification of specific intervention strategies.*

Impact: *Ofsted (Nov 09) praised the success of the results analyses in informing a wide audience of the progress of the most successful departments (e.g. Business Studies, FFT-D gap of over +2 grades per pupil) and the weakest (e.g. Resistant Materials below -1 grades per pupil). Accountability has increased dramatically. This year 90% of subject leaders have met their pupil related performance management objective (66% the previous year).*

How can I address Key Areas which have proved challenging to some applicants in Cohort 16?

As stated above, the Key Areas which provided most challenge to those applicants assessed as not ready for the second stage of the application process in Cohort 14 were Key Areas 5 and 6. In unsuccessful applications there is often a lack of clarity in describing the role, the activity and especially the difference made. Here is a "best example" (KA6) from an [unsuccessful](#) application:

My best example of leading at whole school/organisation level for Strengthening Community:

As a leader and manager I have worked on the community cohesion aspects of the curriculum supporting individual pupils, and families in reducing barriers to learning and securing improved outcomes for pupils through the Every Child Matters Agenda. As in the other key areas discussed this has involved creating and maintaining effective partnerships with a range of stakeholders many of whom are members of the wider community. We constantly strive to find new ways to involve pupils in the community and to increase the communities' awareness of the qualities of our children. Social cohesion is an important aspect of the curriculum and for some pupils the experience of living together learning to cope socially in the wider community, and learning to be a consumer is a vital part of the teaching and learning process which can be successfully delivered outside the classroom. I have been keen to take part in and encourage pupils and staff to take part in Educational visits including residential programmes, visits and community projects. Engaging staff and pupils in the wider curriculum beyond school provides opportunities for both to experience community based learning and celebrate their knowledge and achievement.

However as a leader and manager I am also acutely aware of the potential risks that are involved in delivering learning programmes outside the classroom, and the importance of minimizing such risks. In order to achieve safe working practice and effective risk assessments I have liaised with colleagues in school, and LEA support networks to ensure procedures are known about and systems are in place in school to ensure these procedures are followed. Through co-operative and collaborative planning with parents, pupils, staff

and other outside agencies in this way I have helped to build a school culture and curriculum which takes account of the world beyond the classroom.

You will understand from these extracts that the lack of whole school leadership evidence, particularly on the actual role of the applicant and impact on pupils, has meant that this example was assessed as showing a limited leadership role and lacking measurable impact. The assessor would have had too little evidence of what the applicant actually did and how successful was action taken.

A common feature of examples assessed at below the "ready" level is a lack of evidence of whole school strategic leadership. You should always be very clear as to how the work you have done and the difference you have made impacts on all of the school. Here are extracts from a best example which successfully addresses both of these issues for Key Area 5:

My best example of leading at whole school/organisation level for Securing Accountability:

Description of activity: *Over the past two years I have led on and revised a series of initiatives to improve the quality of pupil assessment and marking across the school.*

The reason for the activity: *Work scrutiny in 2010-11 for the Self Evaluation Framework demonstrated an inconsistent and often unsatisfactory approach to assessment and marking for feedback to pupils, leading to a lack of accountability. This was confirmed by the SIP.*

My role: *I researched good practice in high performing schools locally, consulted on and rewrote the school's assessment and marking policy and wrote guidance notes for teachers. I led staff meetings to train teachers and produced samples of best practice. I organised a whole school scrutiny and reported back to staff on strengths and weaknesses. I supported individual staff to develop their work, in particular and NQT who was struggling with marking. I then designed a self-evaluation tool for staff to use in teams, enabling them to grade areas of their work against Eti criteria. This has clarified expectations, particularly for new staff, and enabled them to collaborate with peers to assess and support each other. The self-evaluation tool has been implemented as a key part of the school's annual monitoring cycle. Teams of teachers report on their self-evaluation to senior management and I have built the grading criteria into the feedback we give to staff through work scrutiny.*

Evidence of the impact: *I formally evaluated the new assessment and marking system and included a questionnaire to pupils on how well they understand how to improve their work. Scrutiny of marking and assessment showed that in 9 classes out of 10 the feedback was always informative and clear. The questionnaire outcome was that 92% of pupils in key Stage 2 said that they knew how to improve their work. I am giving further support in the 10th class. The pupil progress rate has increased in KS2 English by an average of 18% from Dec 2010 to June 2011.*

How do I make sure my best examples show my work at whole school strategic level?

Before deciding on your best for each Key Area, list all the work you have done in recent years which is relevant to the Key Area (using the assessment statements at the top of each Key Area in the application form plus the criteria in Appendix 1) and then question yourself on whole school impact. For example, if you have implemented an assessment and tracking of progress system, focus on why that was necessary and what your overall strategy was in planning to improve pupil progress. *Analyse what difference you have made* rather than describe detail of action you have taken. The table below relates to Key Area 3 and shows an ineffective and an effective approach to describing the personal leadership role in terms of whole school strategy:

Too much descriptive detail-	Succinct and focused-
<p>Working with student teachers is seen as one of the most important aspects of our school's work. It is important for the profession that more people will enter it equipped to help pupils to learn well. I have been responsible for the mentoring of students from xx University since 2008 and I have enjoyed every year. This has enabled me to lead the teaching team to ensure that students receive the highest quality mentoring at all levels. At the beginning of each practice I meet with the students for an hour each to plan with them what aspects of teaching and learning it will be important for them to see. They then focus on their use of the effective methods they see in their own teaching. I also discuss with other members of staff what they think would be important to demonstrate to my students when they are teaching and then feedback their observations and constructive criticism to us both so that it can be fed into the students targets. There is an expectation that teachers will work with students as an opportunity to share all their accumulated expertise over the years as well as their specialisms. This year, one of our former students (2012-13) has been employed by the school as an NQT.</p>	<p>I have been the leader of the school's work as an ICT provider for 2 years (priority number 5 in our school improvement plan). This is a performance Management objective for me, includes development activity, and my target is to enable 100% of ICT students to qualify this year. I work with the tutor from the University to define specific development targets for each student and devise an action plan with clear goals and tasks for the group as well as individuals. The plans cover lesson observations, planning, delivery of teaching and learning and gathering pupil feedback. Each student manages their own plan and reports outcomes to me each week in a structured meeting. Judgement on targets is decided along with the tutor. In 2011 5 out of 7 students qualified (71%), in 2009 this increased to 8 out of 9 (89%) and this year 100% are on track to qualify.</p>

How can I make sure evidence of impact is quantified?

In the Application Pack, you are asked to say for each best example “**What you did, what difference you made and how you know?**” and to do this you should quantify impact of your achievement. You need to tell us specifically how you have measured the difference you have made. Guidance in the Application Pack states “You need to provide information about how you have raised standards and improved outcomes for your school/organisation. This should include specific, quantifiable information such as a percentage improvement in pupil results, budget savings, estimate of time savings, reduced or increased incidence against key indicators, the number of staff positively impacted by the initiative or improvement in inspection judgements”.

Some examples of good quantification of impact taken from Cohort 14 applications are:

- The ETI inspection in Jan 2011 commented that our SEF was well-written, comprehensive and evaluative.
- End KS1 maths results in 2011 were 98% level 2 and above, as opposed to 74% the previous year. This was a rise of 24% and put the school’s KS1 maths attainment above the national average for the first time in at least 5 years. This level of attainment has been sustained into 2012, when end KS1 maths results were 94% level 2 and above.
- Since working with all staff to improve writing, 75% have received ‘outstanding’ judgements from the headteacher in lesson observations of writing, and 20% ‘good’. In the previous year 70% were judged satisfactory and 15% good, with no outstanding judgements made.
- The system saves the school up to £400 a week whilst also providing 7 hours a week extra capacity from two experienced teachers.
- I have formally gathered feedback from teachers about the self-evaluation tool and 96% have said that they like the new system as a way of working and that it provides clarity around expectations.
- 98% of parents (feedback October 2012) reported feeling fully informed and having all their concerns listened and responded to.
- 100% of students gained accreditation in Art or Media from EL to short course GCSE.
- Attendance improved from 49% 2010-11 to 86% 2011-12.
- Lesson observation profile showed an improvement from 7% unsatisfactory and 31% outstanding in 2009/10 to 43% good and 57% outstanding in 2011/12.
- Reported accidents down by 27%.
- Received Investors in People award June 2010.
- ETI inspectors recently praised our children’s excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development and outstanding progress in speaking and listening since the last inspection. Our assessments of nursery children for 2011/12 show that on entry 76% were working below age appropriate levels in communication, language and literacy. By the end of the nursery year 40% of children were in line with age appropriate expectations, representing an increase of 18% on the previous year.
- The effectiveness of our Child Protection procedures and care, guidance and support were judged outstanding. Leadership and management were judged good.
- Levels for Writing showed a measurable improvement in both Years 3 and 6, evidenced by termly assessment levels increasing beyond expected progress (Year 3 mean 0.78 sub-level progress in 2 terms [expected 0.67] and Year 6 0.85 [0.67]).
- The raw number of rewards recorded by staff on a weekly basis increased three-fold following the launch of the new system: over 2000 per week (for 850 pupils, w/b 13th Sept 2010).

- In 2013 the school achieved 39% 5 A*-C inc Eng/Maths, an increase from 32% and above expectations.
- 112 out of 118 (95%) completed the options process to time, more than double the rate last year.

How should my principal/Line Manager support and verify my evidence?

Your principal/line manager will be using the guidance in the Pre Application Guide for Principals/Line Managers and **it is very important** that you discuss your application with your principal/line manager so that your evidence is verified and additional supportive evidence can be given. Remember that both sources of evidence are assessed together so additional evidence from the principal/line manager's perspective is very useful. Here are two good examples from previous cohorts of principal/line manager evidence verifying and supporting KA6:

1. *I verify this evidence. This was an extremely ambitious project and a real departure from our traditional residential school journey programme. The applicant put together a very high quality bid for funding. Despite potential parental opposition to aspects of the project, he presented informative meetings for all parents, skilfully anticipating any pitfalls. The first of the new residentials was a tremendous success with very positive feedback from both children and their families as a unique and very positive experience.*
2. *The applicant has contributed enormously to the very high standards of community engagement and cohesion. The applicant's work has been exemplary in supporting individual pupils and their families and reducing barriers to learning so that pupils can achieve to their optimum. The school has a wide range of stakeholders who are closely involved in the life of the school because of the commitment of the applicant to strengthening communities.*

What further help and support can I access?

Information sessions are available at RTU Summer School and at various centres throughout Northern Ireland during the month of September.

Final thoughts

Remember only **ONE** example per section. Should you provide more than one then only the first example will be assessed!

Remember your examples **MUST BE** specifically relevant to the Key Area and address the assessment statement above each section on the application form. Also the example should refer to the Core Capabilities in Appendix 1 for detail. Your best example for Key Area 1, Shaping the Future, for instance, should show your achievements in sharing the school's vision and in strategically planning to deliver that vision with the involvement of the stakeholder community. This will then address the statement for KA1- "Headteachers are able to create a shared vision focused upon significant goals for improving learning, inspire stakeholders and plan effectively for the achievement of those goals"