

“Roots and Wings International Leadership Programme”

Background

The programme began in September 2002 and organised by Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire Local Education Authorities and involved 9 headteachers from secondary schools in the two counties. “The Roots and Wings Leadership Programme” has linked headteachers in West Wales with colleagues in Tuscany, Italy and Vejle in Denmark. All the headteachers met last September in Gwbrwt, Ceredigion and trios were created linking me with Carlo Testi, Headteacher of a school in Florence and Marianne Iwersen, Head of school in Denmark.

The aims of the project were to develop an understanding of leadership in an international context; to learn about our own leadership styles and preferences; and to acquire knowledge about the school systems in two other countries. In all this the focus was on how to improve standards in our own schools by sharing experiences and considering alternatives to our normal “modus operandi”.

The first three days of the time in Wales was spent looking at theoretical issues and leadership styles and ways of managing schools. All the Headteachers involved under went “Herrmann” profiling which gave an insight into our own motivations and preferences in areas of operation. Also, time was spent looking at the ‘intelligent school model’ and aspects of school climates. These first three days were followed by three days spent in my own school. The two colleagues spent time getting to know the school, visiting lessons, talking to staff and pupils. Also we decided on an issue that we would discuss in depth – namely staff/pupil relationship and analyse the school’s merit/de-merit system and how these areas could be improved in an attempt to improve staff morale, pupil motivation and eventually improve results.

On leaving Wales a formal programme of regular contact was agreed where we share our thoughts about the issues we had discussed and by doing so it would give me alternative courses of action that would not have been natural in line with my Herrmann

profile and normal leadership/management style. We also agreed to examine the 'Rezolv' file that had been provided. To assist the trio in developing our dialogue a coach was allocated to us to pose questions that we did not think about or raise in our continuing dialogue. The communication would occur via e-mail and through the 'Roots and Wings' website.

The months between September and February were, therefore, spent sharing experiences of 'our own' school and considering our actions in the light of feedback provided by the other members of the trio and allotted coach.

Ian McCloy