

STAFF BUTTERFLIES

| Butterfly | Impacting on | Description | Impact |
|-----------|------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Staff Parents | <p>TEA WITH THE HEAD</p> <p>A primary school head decided that she wanted to encourage writing and to really get to know all her children. She first of all shared the idea with her staff and confirmed that they liked the idea. Then came the implementation of the idea. It involved her writing cards inviting three pupils to have tea and biscuits with her at break times on Tuesdays and Thursdays from September to Easter. That way she got through 120 pupils having 'tea and biscuits' with her. She follows up, as a result of skilful questioning and listening, with notes to the class teachers and a note home letting the parent or carer know of the occasion and how good it had been to talk with their child and what she had learned about their progress.</p> | <p>It turned out to be an easy way to build parental confidence, trust and involvement. She said that since the class teacher knew in advance who was attending, it enabled them to have a discussion about each child so there was less chance of any child being so quiet that they are missed – the sort of children we sometimes call 'invisible'. She soon asked invitees to bring their best piece of work at the end of the day when she had had tea and to tell her quietly as well what they found most difficult so that she and the class teacher could help.</p> |
| 2 | Staff | <p>HOSTING A STAFF MEETING</p> <p>Staff meetings are rotated round the classrooms and whoever's classroom it is, acts as host. The first item on every staff agenda is the host explaining how she likes to arrange the room and the intention behind the display she has on the walls. She is required to say what she thinks is the next step in improving the display and how she intends to involve the pupils in carrying out some of the tasks towards improvement.</p> | <p>This is a widely used 'butterfly' and in most cases leads to a much greater awareness of the potential of display as a subliminal educator as well as re-enforcing the practice of pupils having tasks to do as part of developing their sense of responsibility. Certainly the school involved in reports that it has ensured that the tone of the staff meeting was set in the sense that staff were talking about teaching and learning from the word go.</p> <p><i>We agreed there are variations to this theme, all designed to make sure meetings are an opportunity to discuss teaching, learning and assessment. So the variations of the same butterfly include butterflies four five and six below. Another might be all choosing to mark the same piece of children's work and discussing the relative merits of each marker's approach. Interestingly one head deliberately doesn't 'chair'</i></p> |

| Butterfly | Impacting on | Description | Impact |
|-----------|-----------------|--|---|
| | | | <i>these meetings as she seeks to extend leadership skill by asking the host to be chairs.</i> |
| 3 | Staff Pupils | <p>IMPROVING TRANSITION FOR YEAR GROUP TO YEAR GROUP</p> <p>Each autumn, in November, teachers spend a day with their former year group. For example the Year 2 teacher spends the day in the classroom of the Year 3 teacher who is teaching the children she taught the year before. The purpose is that the Year 2 teacher goes round and looks at the work and talks to the youngster she taught the year before in order to improve continuity of learning and to try to make sure that the new teacher is aware of say three children whose progress is pleasantly surprising her and three children whose progress might not be all she had hoped.</p> | <p>The school claims that this practice has various outcomes. First it causes teachers to talk more to each other about 'levels of progress' and spotting those children for whom the transition from one year to the next has coincided or caused a 'pause' in learning. It has also led to teachers getting children to take work to 'show' to their former teacher and to increase dialogue both about rates of progress and those children who may be most at risk of falling behind.</p> <p><i>A variant on this might involve the released teacher simply observing two or three children in somebody else's class, making notes and discussing it with the class teacher at the end of the day.('Observing Learning')</i></p> |
| 4 | Staff | <p>IMPROVING STAFF KNOWLEDGE OF 'NEW' CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: AN AGENDA ITEM AT STAFF MEETINGS</p> <p>One of the phenomena of today's age is the burgeoning of children's books. It is immensely difficult for the teachers to keep up with what is available.</p> <p>One school helps crack that issue by having as a standing item on staff meeting agendas 'New Books'. At each meeting teachers take it in turns to describe a 'new' book they have used with their class and give it a rating. The deal is that another teacher either in the year above or the year below then commits to use it at some point in the year and report back.</p> | <p>The school claims that over the course of the year staff more easily keep up with what has been published and that the impact towards discussion being about 'teaching and learning' rather than transactional business is significant.</p> |
| 5 | Staff | <p>SHARING GOOD PRACTICE</p> <p>A school firmly believed in the maxim that 'the biggest and most underused resource teachers have is each other'. But they also</p> | <p>The impact is very powerful indeed. Staff come away from meetings with practical ideas they can use in their lessons the next day and it has proved an excellent way of initiating</p> |

| Butterfly | Impacting on | Description | Impact |
|-----------|--------------|--|---|
| | | <p>realised that they had to do something more than merely exhort colleagues to share good ideas. So they formally introduced, as a matter of policy, 'Sharing good practice' as the first item on the agenda of every staff meeting.</p> <p>In rotation one teacher at each staff meeting presents on some aspect of 'better' practice they have tried. The slots are short; a maximum of 10 minutes and the presenter is encouraged to be as interactive with their peers as they would be with their children. Many of the presentations were subsequently published in the staff bulletin and put on the CPD section of the e-learning platform.</p> | <p>collaborative working arrangements.</p> <p>It is particularly high leverage in terms of staff development and the improvement of learning and teaching.</p> |
| 6 | Staff | <p>STAFF GRADE THE SCHOOL</p> <p>The first ten minutes of each staff meeting is spent looking at an aspect of the school self-evaluation. It is discussed in pairs and each pair agrees a grade for the school. On re-forming as a whole group they discuss and agree a collective grade and what collective action could make it even better.</p> | <p>The school reports that this is great for renewing vision and re-enforcing culture and 'singing from the same song sheet'. It is also good for establishing an understanding of what the practice is that leads to a particular grade.</p> <p><i>Further variations of these themes and ideas for staff meetings include one that requires the staff in turns to bring something from TESpro (e.g. 'My left field lesson') or even a discussion of their favourite butterfly.</i></p> |
| 13 | Staff | <p>BUYING AT A LOCAL SHOP</p> <p>In a socially challenged area the head on an estate school asked that every member of staff once a week called at the local school to buy something. Her argument was that the parents used the shop and although teachers didn't live locally it was important that they were seen as part of the local community.</p> | <p>It is easy to forget that teachers can be seen as remote from the life of the community in which a school is located and this simple device complemented the efforts of the head to make sure the school was seen as an integral part of the estate and its life.</p> |
| 15 | Staff | <p>RESPECTING AND RAISING THE STATUS OF DINNER LADIES</p> <p>When the dinner lady arrives, teacher downs tools and greet each other very publicly while the children do a formal greeting. Quick</p> | <p>It is very easy to fall into the old habit of talking about non-teaching staff rather than support staff. So any device that emphasises the vital role that each and every member of staff</p> |

| Butterfly | Impacting on | Description | Impact |
|-----------|--------------|--|--|
| | | very positive chat between staff follows about how wonderful the children are etc. | plays in school life, whether teachers or in a support role such as dinner ladies, is to be treasured. |
| 16 | Staff | COFFEE AND BUTTERED TOAST IN THE MORNING Every morning, or if pushed for cash one morning a week, start the day with plates of buttered toast tea and coffee in staff room. Head serves and washes up!!! | There are variations on this theme- some people run to bacon sandwiches and not all heads wash up! The point is twofold. First how a day starts makes a difference to energy levels and of course how children learn so staff themselves need to be in the best possible mood. Secondly it is easy to overlook the subtleties of social gestures to different groups in the school community. I confess I am not sure that the head should do the washing up <i>every</i> morning – once a week would be enough! |
| 17 | Staff | TEACHERS OBSERVING CHILDREN Teachers are freed to spend time in pairs observing children in a class for a whole morning and then discussing each child's development with the class teacher in order to improve the likelihood of each child's successful learning. The school has extended this to involvement of 'TAs' and in doing so improved both the TAs knowledge but also their ability in 'one to one' work. | This is an interesting variation on the 'You know you are in a good school whenteachers observe each other teach etc' mentioned at the beginning. Observing children closely has always been the watchword of successful teaching and this simple idea ensures it takes place while at the same time promoting staff development. |
| 19 | Staff | THE TEACHERS' GOLDEN TICKETS Each Wednesday the SLT of a school would put two golden tickets in two teacher's pigeon holes. SLT were going to teach their classes that day. They are released as a pair – and the choice of who goes with whom is vital – to spend the day together going round the school and taking part and observing all that goes on. Each is expected to do at least one private note of thanks and to put up on staff room accounts of good things that are going on. | This ticks off so many desirable features...observing teachers, staff development, talking about teaching and learning – there are clear focused ground rules for the observation, SLT seeing at close hand the work of children as they teach... <i>Another school reported a variant on this by saying that the purpose of the teachers' visits was to find good and interesting practice and then display on the staff notice board thus building a CPD record.</i> |
| 24 | Staff | MUTUAL THANKS AMONG STAFF There is a 'Thank You' board in the staff room. Staff – all staff | It is very difficult to make and sustain a culture of mutual support, particularly in large schools. It can be the thing that |

| Butterfly | Impacting on | Description | Impact |
|-----------|-----------------|--|---|
| | | <p>teachers and support staff - write on a compliments slip to thank other staff for a particular action which has helped. For example, thanking welfare person for 'cleaning the microwave, or teaching colleague for swapping timetable slot, or cook for covering sickness absence of kitchen manager.</p> | <p>gets forgotten. Yet we know that it underpins the energy and attitudes in schools to it is vital to think of ways of achieving such a culture.</p> <p>This sounds a good way to ensure it happens, although I guess that if it could over time lose its effect. Acts of unexpected kindness are vital in all organisations especially schools where we provide examples to the next generation. So remembering birthdays, private acts of thoughtfulness and celebrating rites of passage are crucial.</p> |
| 27 | Staff Family | <p>MAKING A VIRTUE OF VOLUNTEERING</p> <p>It started with a school trying to 'think outside the box' on the issue of volunteering and those parents or families who lacked self-esteem or had low aspirations for themselves and their children. So the school identified issues where they could help and asked for 'time limited' volunteering as learning/classroom volunteers leading to a massive lift in confidence.</p> | <p>Most schools will recognise the phenomenon of the parents/families described here. The school in question argues that time limiting the task helped overcome the predictable resistance and that it worked in some cases.</p> |
| 31 | Staff | <p>THE ASSISTANT HEAD'S USE OF A TIMETABLED MORNING OFF CLASS TEACHING.</p> <p>A head, recognising the outstanding skills of an AH both as a coach and as a widely trusted colleague, programmed so that she is off-timetable on Wednesday mornings when she uses her times as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out a 'learning walk' • Team teaching with NQTs or less confident teachers to extend their skills • Teaching in a class other than her own thus freeing up the teacher to a specific 'observational task' in a classroom other than her own. <p>She has a clearly defined feed-back task for the various roles</p> | <p>The head says that the AH in question is widely trusted and respected as a teacher; she also has an uncanny knack of feeding back in a helpful and accurate way which strengthens others.</p> <p>It is not unlike Butterflies three and nineteen in the sense that it uses senior team time to free staff to observe each other's practice. All require careful planning and some thought of how to obtain optimum benefit from the exercise.</p> |

| Butterfly | Impacting on | Description | Impact |
|-----------|--------------|--|---|
| | | involved and through her the school is extending its knowledge of learning and teaching. | |
| 32 | Staff | <p>LEARNING PARTNERS Two teachers work collaboratively on an issue where they want to improve their teaching. The area of focus (e.g. questions) is chosen by themselves. The SLT then enables cover so each can observe the other. They can choose to report to colleagues at staff meetings if they wish, though not compulsory</p> | The school reports considerable enthusiasm for the scheme. It is a variant of butterflies three, nineteen and thirty one in the sense that it allows SLT to enable teachers' observation of each other. |
| 40 | Staff | <p>POSTCARDS FOR STAFF Ahead commented that she took the idea of postcards further and regularly sent postcards to staff thanking them for some 'beyond the call of duty' contribution. She said they were much appreciated.</p> | The head's comment touches on a really important point, namely the need to respect and recognise staff in any way that seems natural and appropriate. A leader's duty, at any level, is to consider how to best achieve acts of unexpected and private appreciation and kindness. |
| 41 | Staff | <p>STANDING AT THE SCHOOL GATE The Head describes how she has a ritual of standing at the school gate to welcome pupils and staff at the beginning of the day and at the end to greet and bid farewell.</p> | This is a time honoured practice, which as she explained has the added advantage that it breathes life into her 'open door' policy because it has become the habit that people know they can quickly ask her for time later to discuss a particular issue. |
| 43 | Staff | <p>FRIDAY AFTER SCHOOL COLLAPSE TIME The head found a small group of staff at the end of a week fell into the habit of collapsing around a table to drink tea and compare notes. She 'fed' them 'goodies' and soon everybody looked forward to the 'after school on Friday' informal sociable group ideas meeting.</p> | The head says it's the best thing that ever happened in her school and really was 'planned/managed serendipity' which is probably a good description of how many butterflies start. |
| 47 | Staff | <p>DRESSING UP Teacher who dresses up as main character for writing lesson.</p> | Yet another example of the 'alter ego' technique of creating more characters in an attempt to unlock the minds of |

| Butterfly | Impacting on | Description | Impact |
|-----------|--------------|---|-----------|
| | | Mrs Discovery teacher dresses as a character for Science lessons. | children. |