

Developing Primary Subject Networks

Kate Flood

Published March 8, 2023

To discuss this case study, please contact us via email customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk



Key Points

The 2019 OfSTED Framework has a much sharper focus on the substance of the curriculum at primary level; an expectation of an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum rich in knowledge. Whilst welcomed, this has created new challenges for many primary teachers: the need to enhance their own subject knowledge, retain best primary practice in delivery and still prioritise time for our core task of literacy and numeracy.

Purpose

What were your reasons for doing this development work?

There was a mixed historical landscape in the borough in terms of subject networks. Maths and English are well established and meet termly. This directly reflects the priority these core subjects have had in recent years. Music, PE, Science and Computing had a history of meeting with named central leads but there were no networks for History, Geography Art or DT. We wanted to bring a consistency to the offer and to create supportive networks across the full curriculum. Two lead practitioners from schools were appointed to lead History and Geography and Art and DT are led by the central team.

Who were the identified target learners?

Subject leaders in primary schools whether experienced or new to the role.

What were your success criteria?

Consistent levels of engagement and participation at twilights – indicating the value and impact of the network.

A development of trust and social capital amongst participants.

A successful end of year sharing 'Teach Meet' event.

More schools engage in 2023-4.

What did you do? (What success criteria did you use?)

We have set up subject networks for the 4 foundation subjects to bring together subject leaders keen to develop expertise and challenges. Meetings are broadly half termly and after school. They are well managed with timely and efficient planning and communication.

We believe that it is this network and building of social capital over time that will have the greatest impact. In addition to meeting to discuss, for example, how to plan effective field work in geography, use of sketchbooks in art or capturing the process of design technology projects, we have had live webinars with OfSTED subject leaders, Access Art and Hepp DT – and had a half day conference with a keynote from Emma Turner (author of *Simplicitus* 2021) . The History group has also met at the National Gallery and the Geography group will meet at Camden Archives later this year.

We are only two terms in; we have high hopes going forward!

What specific teaching resources did you use?

Each network lead drew on their own experience and expertise. Materials, links and slides from each session are loaded onto a padlet creating a really rich and dynamic resource. Over time we hope participants will share resources and planning. Examples are linked below:

[Primary Geography Network](#)

[Primary History Network](#)

[Primary Art Network](#)

Outcomes and Impact

What has been the impact on pupil learning and teaching?

Two terms in, we are building a strong social capital and participating teachers are enthusiastic about the network and the support it offers. As a result teaching and learning back in school is enhanced. Teachers are excited by new resources and strategies and feel better equipped to support colleagues.

Evidence of impact on pupil learning and teaching/leadership

Over time, teachers have become more willing to present and to share resources both in meetings and on the padlet.

Presentations at the Summer 23 Teach Meet.