

Building a research network.

Thrive Teaching School Alliance.

Joanne Calladine-Evans (TSA Director).



Who we are.

The lead school is St Richard's Catholic College (Bexhill on Sea), a high performing 11-16 voluntary aided Catholic school. We are a mixed phase alliance of primary, secondary and tertiary organisations.

Processes to establish the network.

There was a pre-existing set of relationships based around activities. The network grew out of a developing culture of enquiry that was beginning with learning threes and pupil researchers. This was then formalised through attaining Teaching School status and engaging in the newly developed Sussex Research Network.

Activities.

- Boys achievement research
- Science lesson study
- Key stage 2 progression (maths/ICT)
- Doctoral research (RE/Science)
- Assessment without levels (Science and English)
- Pupils as classroom researchers.



Next steps.

We aim to embed research practice across the alliance of schools.

Actions:

- Involve the Alliance schools in further research and development through University Partnership.
- Identify more areas of small project research across the Alliance and find funding streams to enable engagement.
- With other agencies secure a broad area of research to bring alliance schools together, ie: Transition in Maths
- Develop a model of pupils as researchers across the alliance schools.

Successes and challenges.

The Teaching School has completed its first year, making this an evolving network. In appraising the progress of the TSA we have employed the Hargreaves maturity model with our key partners. This identified us as being at the development stage.

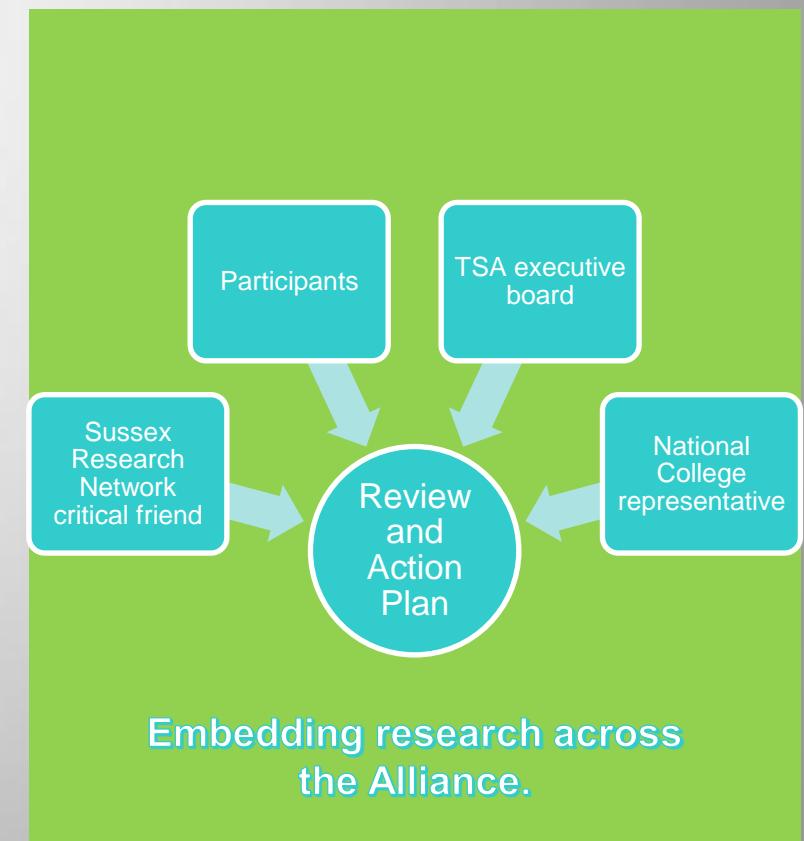
Successes.

Our key pattern of success has been the focus on learning at every level, pupil through to leader. The most impact has come from the activities that have involved pupils and been focused on having a direct consequence for progression.

- Key learning – finding a platform to feed back to staff.
- Being willing to trial at scale – whole school approach.
- Incorporating the value of research in leadership training.
- Broad evaluation via pupils – pupils as researchers, year and school councils.
- Giving status to research qualifications.

Challenges.

- Bringing professionals together for planning, appraising progress and review.
- Communicating opportunities effectively to get 'buy in'.
- Establishing new relationships – building trust.





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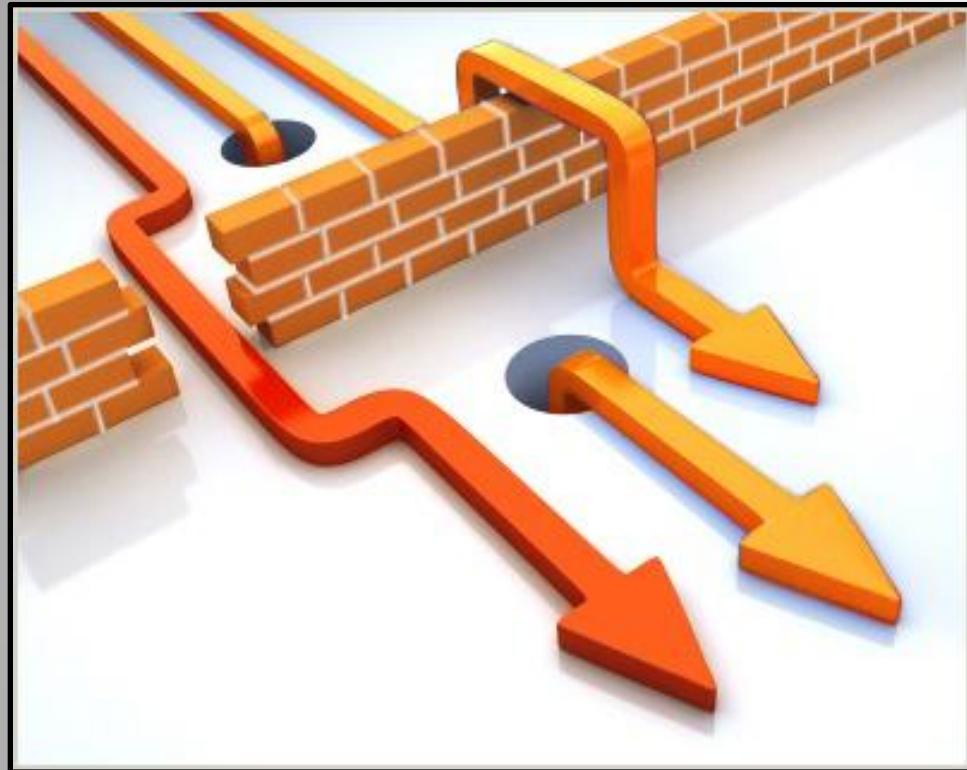
Research Map

Contexts, Curriculum & Values: Literature Review (6000 words)	Research Methods: investigate & pilot a method; 20 minute (Poster presentation of this to peers & tutors.)	Developing Research Leaders and Enquiry (6000 words)	Dissertation (15,000 words)
<p>RL1 (Tom) Assessment without levels in Science. A review of policy and research on assessment from pre-Black Box to present.</p>	<p>Questionnaire /survey to explore current assessment practices, resources, applications, AND needs/ purposes across the alliance/ E Sussex/SRN.</p> <p>AND teachers' opinions of 'assessment: what for', how to do it better, more efficiently etc.</p>	<p>Setting up an informal research community of science teachers to focus on assessment beyond levels.</p> <p>Could begin in-school this year; extend to alliance in autumn 15? Including KS2?</p> <p>This forum could be pivotal in driving the cross alliance survey work and the dissertation.</p>	<p>How can the St Richards Alliance develop a cross phase (KS2-3) framework for monitoring and sharing pupil attainment in the 'beyond levels' national curriculum?</p> <p>The developing and trialling of a framework for Science?</p>
<p>RL2 (John) Assessment across the English curriculum: a de-construction of 'what are we assessing?' and at KS3 and 4 and 'why'?</p>	<p>Focus groups in and beyond the school.</p> <p>Investigating current and potential future models for assessment, drawing on a range of school experiences e.g. Bexhill High.</p>	<p>Leading and building in-school and cross Alliance enquiry groups on cross phase curriculum review esp re assessment.</p> <p>Could include establishing a 'virtual' enquiry group, based on blogging/forum etc.?</p>	<p>What are the effects on pupil attainment of revising KS3 (English:(planning for pedagogy and assessment) to bring greater coherence and continuity with KS4? A pilot towards a whole school approach.</p>



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Obstacles



Time - balancing school/Masters work

What's the point?

Moving away from current practice

Agendas - Uni vs School

Where to begin?

Challenging the plateau

Encouraging enthusiasm

How to disseminate?

Travel

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Successes



LMT enthusiasm

Informed Practice

Growing confidence

Opportunities to experiment

Evident need from the staff for research

Creation of new enquiry group

Genuine establishing of research culture

"One of the most **successful** things for me has been the **enthusiasm** from the staff. It's been great talking to LMT and my colleagues about **experimenting** and trying out new things."

John Steele

"The thing I'm looking forward to is being involved in a research group that will **directly impact**, not only our department, but potentially the **school as a whole.**"

Tom Holloway



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What have we learned?

University sessions

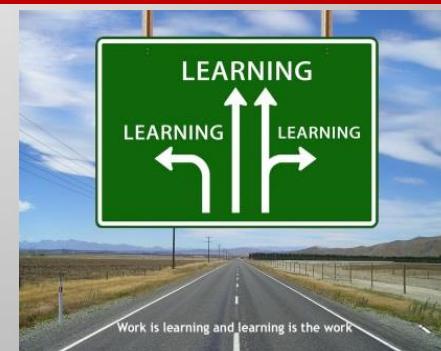
- **Research methodology**
- **Research methods (questionnaires and interviews in particular)**
- **Analysis of data**
- **Ethical considerations**

Our own areas of focus

- **Closing the gender gap**
- **Mentoring and coaching**
- **The purpose of assessment**
- **The future - assessment without levels**
- **Current staff opinion on assessment at St. Richard's**

Establishing a research culture

- **Numerous members of staff have completed research degrees**
- **Limited research culture at the school, some examples of prior research:**
 - **Boy's achievement**
 - **Aspirational target setting**
- **Members of staff have been approached from the Science and English departments**
- **Enquiry teams are in place for an autumn launch.**
- **Important to involve staff in enquiry process**





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Looking to the future...

Minor Project

- **Small departmental focus groups**
- **Initial first focus on current assessment pitfalls (highlighted by research method assignment)**
- **Trialing of new discussed assessment as part of a randomised control study**
- **The focus group will look at the advantages and disadvantages of each new model.**



Dissertation

Tentative plan



Tom – Will look to further develop a model in coalition with feeder schools that can be used for transition.



John – Will look to develop a cross phase assessment system that will lend itself to the new GCSEs