

Ensuring Excellence in Staff Induction

The most valuable asset in any school is its staff and ensuring that you successfully introduce new colleagues into the organisation and their new role within it is a critical process. Getting induction right ensures staff are confident in their practice, effective in their performance and impact on learners as rapidly and positively as possible. In this piece, our school relationship team outlines the key features of an effective induction programme and how BlueSky supports this.

The Importance of Effective Induction

A clearly structured and well-managed induction process serves two important purposes. It ensures staff are welcomed and supports them to undertake their duties, and fully deliver to the expectations of their new role, in the shortest possible time.

Most schools have a documented staff induction process however, managing and quality assuring this can be challenging. Induction often involves the co-ordination of many contributors so having a clear programme and method of documenting the process helps to establish consistency in the quality of experience and the transition from induction to regular management of staff performance, eg appraisal.

Key Features of Effective Induction

1. Understanding the organisation or role

It is easy to overwhelm new staff with a mass of information covering general school information, policies, procedures and expectations. Structuring this in a staff handbook can be helpful but ensuring individuals digest and understand it in the context of their role is important.

This is made easier through a staged approach to induction, where information is personalised and introduced in a priority order depending on the role, or signposted in relation to the core expectations of that role. Reviewing this at key points, for example, in group sessions or review meetings provides the assurance that critical information has been understood.



BlueSky allows the creation of bespoke reviews. Using this function to provide an induction 'passport' allows linking of resources and prompts to support the process. Induction mentors can sign-off the review through 360 feedback. Alternatively, reviewing against professional standards can provide an induction baseline.

2. Mentoring and coaching

The role of the induction mentor is a critical one. Appointing a nominated colleague with whom regular contact is possible means that questions and issues can be addressed quickly and without fear of judgement. Having a clear expectation of this role, with necessary training available, ensures consistency and means that concerns can be addressed as soon as they arise.



The mentor area in BlueSky enables monitoring of induction reviews and targets. BlueSky's journal provides a place for the individual to capture notes and reflections.

3. Agreeing performance targets and identifying immediate learning needs

With this support, and a baseline review in place, you will be able to agree appropriate professional objectives or targets and identify any immediate professional learning needs for new staff. Whether the completion of these objectives is within a defined induction period, or over a year, the precise identification of success criteria should be



How in BlueSky?

Look out for the BlueSky cloud, which identifies how BlueSky can help you with a particular area.

documented to allow rigorous monitoring through an agreed evaluation process.



BlueSky allows the creation of individual professional learning plans and all CPL to be recorded and measured for impact. Professional objectives can be set, reviewed and evidenced by line managers, through the manage functions.

4. Personalising professional learning

A structured induction programme, with regular reviews with the mentor or coach, provides the opportunity to review the impact of initial professional learning and plan further personalised CPL activities to meet the new colleague's needs. This approach also ensures effective induction into the school's professional learning programme and philosophy and communicates expectations about measuring the impact of CPL on practice and outcomes.



You can record in-house and external CPL through BlueSky's training and CPL areas. The review and self-evaluation modules can then be used to measure the impact of your professional learning programme.

5. Monitoring performance

The monitoring of individual staff performance should follow the school's usual procedures for performance management with the additional support of the induction mentor or coach. Together, these processes should ensure that any concerns are identified and addressed early on and strengths recognised and maximised. It is important to have a systematic quality assurance process to track the

impact of the induction process. This self-evaluation is usually overseen by a senior leader and will involve staff who mentor, coach and line manage new staff as well as the staff members themselves.



BlueSky's self-evaluation module enables you to have a consistent and accessible overview of the quality of practice of individuals, teams and the whole school.

From Induction to Continuous Improvement

Having an induction process, which staff feel involved in and empowered by, ensures that they immediately feel part of the organisation and understand its ethos and commitment to them as professionals. Final sign-off of the induction process should be formally acknowledged. If it has been effective, induction will have reinforced the behaviours of continual review and empowered the new member of staff to lead their own improvement alongside, and in collaboration with, their colleagues.

To find out more about how BlueSky can support your induction processes, please contact us or join one of our [webinars](#).



About the School Relationship Team

The school relationship team combines 150 years' school leadership and business management experience to support you in using BlueSky.

Talk to us today about how BlueSky can support your induction procedures.

Tel: 01483 880004 | Email: support@blueskyeducation.co.uk

Tel: **01483 880004** | Email: info@blueskyeducation.co.uk

Twitter: [@blueskymatters](https://twitter.com/blueskymatters) | www.blueskyeducation.co.uk

BlueSky support and printed materials provide general guidance and should not be viewed as a specific recommendation when dealing with particular issues and practices.

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Use this checklist to consider how well your induction processes are working.

A = Development needed **B** = Meets the statement **C** = Exceeds the statement **D** = Clear strength

Understanding the Organisation or Role	A	B	C	D
There is a structured, defined induction programme that can be personalised to the role and context of new colleagues				
All key school policies and procedures are signposted within the induction programme				
The induction programme necessary for the role is clearly defined as part of the recruitment process				
The criteria for achieving a successful induction is shared with new staff on appointment				
Mentoring and Coaching				
An induction mentor or coach is assigned to new staff and introduced at the earliest opportunity				
The role of the induction mentor or coach is clearly defined and expectations are made explicit				
All induction mentors and coaches are trained to undertake the role				
The performance of the induction mentor or coach is quality assured as part of their role in the school				
Agreeing Performance Targets and Identifying Immediate Learning Needs				
New staff complete a self-review against identified standards/induction audit				
Where appropriate, any review of previously set targets, e.g. in a previous school, is documented				
Initial performance targets take account of the individual needs as well as school priorities				
Individual professional learning needs are agreed and documented based on the self-review and agreed objectives				
Personalising Professional Learning				
Professional learning needs are shared with the CPL leader/mentor to ensure opportunities are made available				
Professional learning opportunities and the impact of activities are reviewed regularly with new staff				
Monitoring Performance				
Formal reviews during the induction period are documented according to the school's agreed induction policy				
All elements of the induction process are quality assured to inform the self-evaluation of the school				
The impact of induction on the individual's performance is measured				
The induction period is formally signed-off by the line manager				

BlueSky's online software helps hundreds of schools support their new staff. Talk to us today about how we can support your school.

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