



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE** | North of  
England



## INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT REPORT

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Kilgarth School  
Merseyside**

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE SPECIALIST – Heather Beattie**

**DATE: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013**



Investors in People North of England is delivered by idg, official partner for the North East, North West and Yorkshire & Humber

**T:** 0844 4068008 **E:** [iip@i-dg.co.uk](mailto:iip@i-dg.co.uk) **W:** [www.i-dg.co.uk](http://www.i-dg.co.uk)  
**P:** idg, 1 Cardale Park, Harrogate, HG3 1RZ

## **Introduction**

Kilgarth School was first recognised as an Investors in People organisation in 2006 and has been on a journey of continuous improvement, striving to achieve best practice, utilising their manpower and resources to achieve high standards of productivity and quality of teaching.

With this review the School took up the challenge of the full framework with the aspiration of achieving Gold status to reflect on the journey and mark the levels of excellent practice which the full team have contributed to and developed over the recent years in working with the boys and their families.

The onsite interviews took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2013 with feedback to the whole staff team at the end of the second on site day.

The assessor spoke to 13 staff from across the spectrum and this included the Chair of Governors. This represented 50% against an IIP UKCES suggested sample of 35- 65%

A follow up meeting has been set up for the end of April to discuss the report and the further development opportunities as part of a continuous improvement plan.

## **Objectives for the Assessment**

1. To maintain a strong level of resources in the face of the funding changes to ensure the maximum impact is made on the level of education for the boys and the opportunities they will be able to access on leaving.
2. It is planned to introduce a coaching and mentoring model through the school and from discussions with all staff propose a model
3. Do the vision and values need to be updated? Identify what is currently understood and suggest a way to revitalise, reflecting the current aspirations and ambition's for the school

## **Outcome**

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for assessors by the Investors in People Commission for Employment and Skills, the Assessor was satisfied beyond any doubt that Kilgarth School continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. On behalf of Investors in People North of England the Assessor would like to congratulate the Kilgarth School in this achievement.

The assessor also confirms that Kilgarth School has met 146 evidence requirements above the 39 in the Investors in People Standard and this equates to a Gold award requiring at least 165 evidence requirements. On behalf of Investors in People North of England the assessor would like to congratulate Kilgarth School on this additional achievement.

The next review will be due by March 2016 with a half way interaction in September 2014.

## Executive Summary

It was clear from the outset that Kilgarth School was operating well above the level of the standard and this was confirmed through the responses given in all the interviews with staff.

The assessor was very impressed with the level of communication, strength of leadership, consultation with staff, and the streamlined planning and monitoring activities. The needs of the individual child was very much the focus of school and despite the challenges of dealing with the boys' emotional, social and behavioural difficulties all the staff have a passion for supporting, nurturing and engaging the boys to be able to access a better quality of life for themselves, their families and the wider community.

-----

The staff, in all of the interviews, felt supported through excellent teamwork, good communications, relevant development, and this matched the strategy and expectations of the organisation.

Overall, it was clear that the commitment to people development was linked to the provision of a range of learning and development opportunities, structured planning and evaluation processes. Importantly, there was clear evidence of relevant outcomes relating both to individual development and the performance of the School.

Communication was considered excellent and included daily updates and debriefs, Inset days, directed time, team meetings and planning and evaluation meetings, all of which were highly structured and focused. Communication was cited as a major factor in the success of the school and everyone was able to clearly describe how they knew and understood what was expected of them.

Linked to the strong ethos of consultation and involvement, people felt recognised and listened to. The majority felt valued through being trusted to do things, being given extra responsibilities or opportunities which made the most of their own personal interests and passion and many described how they were excited about having their ideas taken on board and supported as they were put into practice.

Leadership and management were seen by the staff to be very strong and many referred to the leadership team as being ambitious for the school and their students, driven, focused and very supportive. All line managers demonstrated high levels of capability in their current role of getting the best from their staff to support the boys. Everyone had clear expectations and understanding of the role of a manager and without exception all spoke highly of their manager in making things happen, and in getting the best out of them.

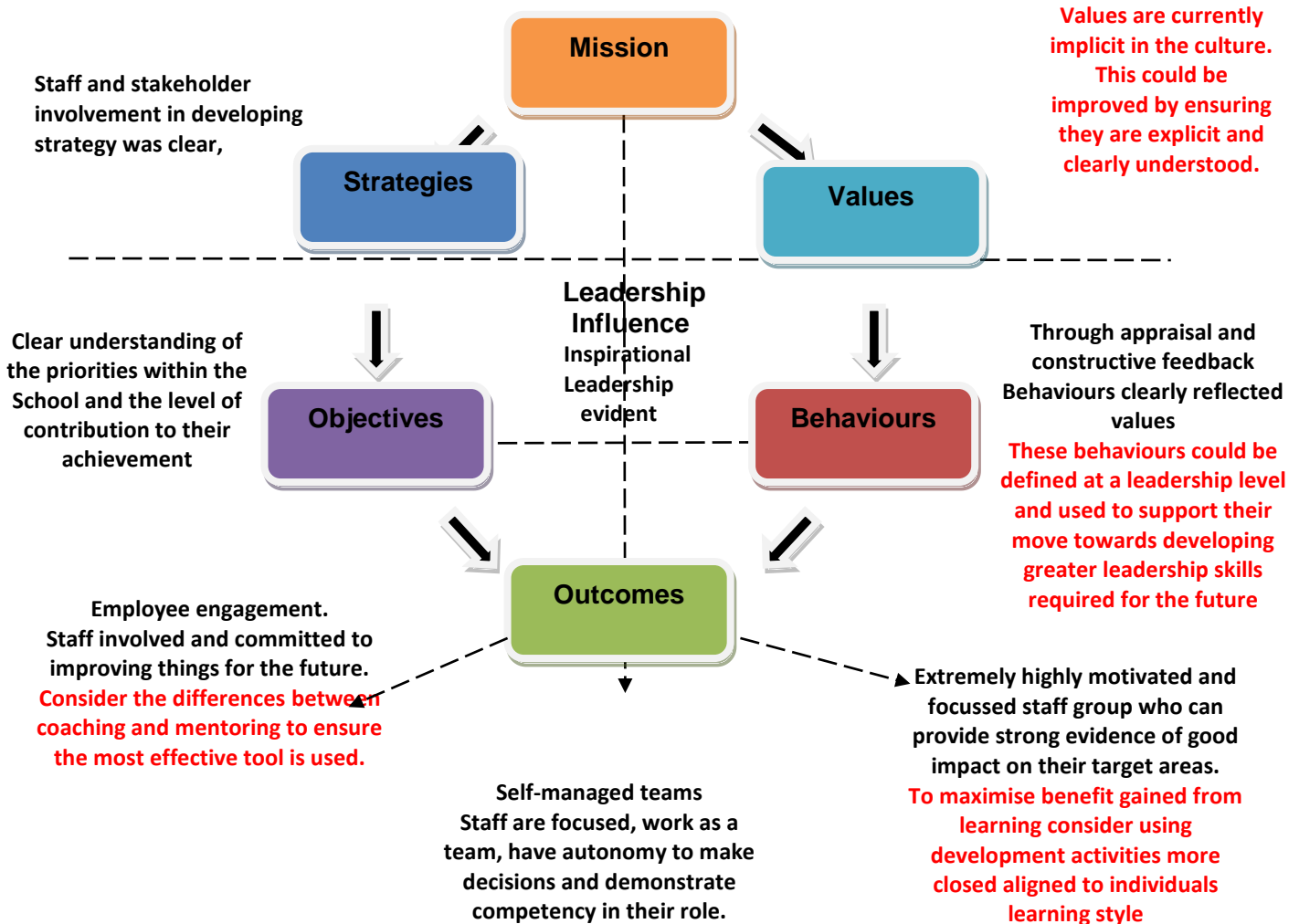
Performance management has been consistent and strong. All staff related to having regular discussions and appraisals where they could discuss issues around their work and how they understood and contributed to the continuing success and reputation of the School. There was also a strong informal communication system and the managers would be readily available for all staff during the day. There was a very strong focus through all performance management and professional development about the Happy Learner being the central focus and ensuring/ evidencing impact to improve outcomes for the learner.

## Summary of key findings in conjunction with the alignment model

In connection to moving the organisation forward, there was some excellent evidence of lateral alignments being observed at Kilgarth School and these have been noted against this model. In line with continuous improvement suggestions have been highlighted in the appendix at the back of this report.

All staff were clear on the mission to "Together we go the extra mile".  
**This has been in place for some time and would benefit from a review to refresh and refocus on the purpose of the team. Aim for Long term ambitions and greater aspirations.**

Values harmonious with staff focus in line with strategy  
**Values are currently implicit in the culture. This could be improved by ensuring they are explicit and clearly understood.**



Continuously reflecting on how the organisation's operation fits with the alignment model would not only ensure that Kilgarth School moves forward with its people in order to meet its objectives but will also ensure that maximum alignment was achieved in order to continuously deliver its standard of teaching and learning to its children and local community.

## Findings against the Standard

(As agreed in the plan)

**Objective - To maintain a strong level of resources in the face of the funding changes to ensure the maximum impact is made on the level of education for the boys and the opportunities they will be able to access on leaving.**

### Culture moving forward, embracing changes, excited about new opportunities

The organisation has a vision/ purpose, strategy and plan in place

Everyone described the mission to "Go the extra mile".

All were able to highlight the shared vision and how they individually and collectively contributed to the achievement of this. At the start of each year all staff will have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to the strategy and plans for the coming year so everyone is committed to achieving the same goals. The vision however has been in place for a number of years, this could be a good opportunity to refresh and revitalise the vision to ensure it reflects the schools current needs and aspirations.

Everyone was clear on their role and what was expected of them. Team meetings have become the central focus of updating and reviewing progress harnessing the team's efforts within the bigger picture. At an individual level this was also outlined within job descriptions and reinforced through development, individual support and team meetings. The clear outcomes of this way of working has been improved flow of information, sharing best practice, staff having full ownership and understanding their accountability resulting in greater levels of employee engagement.

*"There are high expectations on us to deliver and lots of support and guidance if we need"*

### People are involved in planning and decision making

The approach applied to the business planning activities is clearly a success in not only involving everyone in the decision making process, but goes much further to improving the clarity and focus of all decisions so that the needs of the boys are the central focus.

Everyone described how team meetings were open and honest discussions where they could put forward ideas and contribute to discussions, new activities or projects which would lead to a decision. The result was that everyone understood why decisions were taken and the factors involved. Hence, creating much greater levels of commitment to working as one team, for the collective good of the School.

### Success is celebrated

It was evident that as the teams have come together in the past few years, and as the new Head Teacher has evolved the roles of the other senior managers there has been a shift in the leadership style to devolve responsibility to the team. Many examples were given where staff had come forward with ideas and suggestions for making things better because they were committed to the vision of the School.

*"The School recognises achievements through a range of ways including the early dart on Fridays, feedback in staff meetings, letters from parents, students returning and reflecting on their time at Kilgarth, respect for the relationships we develop with the boys and in the way we are trusted to get one with it."*

*"Because everyone cares about the boys they are not afraid to say what they feel and challenge things under discussion"*

### Leadership and management strategy linked to the business strategy

The appraisal programme within the School delivers a strong cascade of objectives clearly linking the strategic plans to individual targets through the teams and curriculum areas. Individuals are clear about their responsibilities and have strong accountability and ownership of these. Performance management discussions and weekly updates are used to support individuals in developing the skills to deliver their targets which contribute to taking the School forward and to stretching their skills and offering career progression.

Succession planning activities have been put into place on a number of levels. The management team have been proactive at spotting talent and through a nurturing process have developed skill, knowledge and expertise of a number of staff to further their careers, enhance and enrich their job roles and to supporting the whole team in encouraging team development.

Through developing people from within and identifying individual's talents and working to their strengths, there were many examples shared with the assessor where people had progressed during their time there. They all spoke of having had opportunities to do different roles which had contributed to improved flexibility and improving their skill base and confidence and had made a significant impact in improving the outcomes for the boys which attend.

### Greater business acumen displayed by more staff in how they work and interact with each other

#### People believe they make a difference

Through the target setting activities everyone was clear on how they made a difference and in interview many examples were shared with the assessor of the impact people had made on a the boys, their families, colleagues, and the wider community through links with other schools and offering training programmes for other schools in the area.

Within the communications and performance management, people responded well to being listened to and this contributed to how people felt valued and understood their contribution to the continued success of Kilgarth School.

*"I am very proud to be part of Kilgarth and what we do to improve the lives of our boys and their families."*

*"Our ideas are taken on board and we are able try out new initiatives with the support of the team"*

### Ownership and responsibility is encouraged

As previously mentioned in this report the strong cascade of involving all staff in planning, and decision making in conjunction with open leadership style and the learning organisation approach has resulted in everyone having clear ownership and responsibility at a level appropriate to their role.

Additionally the strong processes in place for planning and monitoring resulted in staff having clarity of their role. The potential is there to further enhance this via strengthening the accountability for areas within their remit either individually or as part of a team. This clarity of individual responsibility once embedded and established within the culture will support the further scope for creativity and innovation which will continue to enhance the potential for continuous improvement.

*"They definitely empower you here to grow. I have lots of autonomy".*

*"You get so close to the boys that you want to understand /know they see it so we all go the extra to make it special for them."*

*“People here go above and beyond because they believe in what they are doing and want the best for the boys”*

#### People believe their contributions are valued

Through the strong communication strategy and the learning organisation approaches adopted the School is good at sharing knowledge across the different levels. This knowledge sharing was evident in terms of people returning from development to share with colleagues during meetings, directed time or informally as appropriate.

On a higher level the School has been recognised for its success both locally and nationally. They have developed and produced material to support other educational establishments to improve outcomes through their interactions with boys with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.

*“We have all been asked to deliver some CPD to our colleagues”*

*“We all know each other’s strengths and weaknesses so help to support each other”*

*“in our daily debrief we openly discuss what could have been done better and what went well- to focus is not on us but on how the boys got through the day. This helps us understand them better and help them further”*

*“I am absolutely inspired by everyone here; they are all fantastic at different things and I learn from them all”*

**Objective It is planned to introduce a coaching and mentoring model through the school – from discussions with all staff propose a model**

#### Coaching and mentoring model to ensure a strong cascade of sharing best practice in creative and innovative ways.

Innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development are used.

Kilgarth embraces the learning organisation ethos and as such everything that happens is a learning experience. The senior team all discussed how they had created opportunities for learning and development and integrated it through other activities so the learner hardly realised it was happening until the reflection on learning within the appraisal discussion.

#### What motivates people is understood.

As the team are relatively small and very close knit with strong levels of communication and support it is clear that the management as well as peers understand the motivations, aspirations and needs of the rest of the team. This understanding has worked to create opportunities, enhance skills and knowledge, career progression or flexibility for work-life balance elements.

#### Learning priorities are linked to the plan

The School operates a relatively flat structure, the team are close knit and the leaders, through performance management, are clearly understanding of the interests, skills and abilities of all the staff. In interview, many of the staff described how they have always had an interest in set things and the School has used this passion/ interest to support the continued development of the boys and progress towards maximising the opportunities for them.

#### Peoples learning and development needs are met

Kilgarth takes the learning organisation approach to developing the skills and expertise of the teams. Many interviewees described themselves when they first started working with the School and the journey they had been taken on. In many incidences people believed that through



discussions and performance management the leadership team could see a potential and nurtured and encouraged people to continually do more to stretch and challenge themselves.

Lots of people were supported in learning and those interviewed could give examples of the widening of the breadth of their development and/or qualifications. Many spoke of how their learning had been geared to their own aspirations and strengths and therefore the training programme allowed for a range of development activities. The assessor was often told in interview about personal aspirations, which were closely aligned with the School and how development was planned to support them. When asked how this development would support the School, people were clear on how their planned development would enhance the provision they could offer to the boys and their families within the wider community.

*“If you want the opportunity to do more and progress, this is the best place to be.”*

### Culture of continuous learning and Impact can be demonstrated

The development and training of staff has led to improved performance as well as enhanced outcomes for the boys and an improved reputation with partner organisations locally and nationally. The senior team were able to clearly link the development of the team to the progress of the School and went further to give examples of improved staff commitment to quality of teaching and new ideas and approaches and positive attitudes to team working and problem solving with a willingness to learn new information and seek improvements. Employees were able to show how their development had produced results for them personally as well as for the boys.

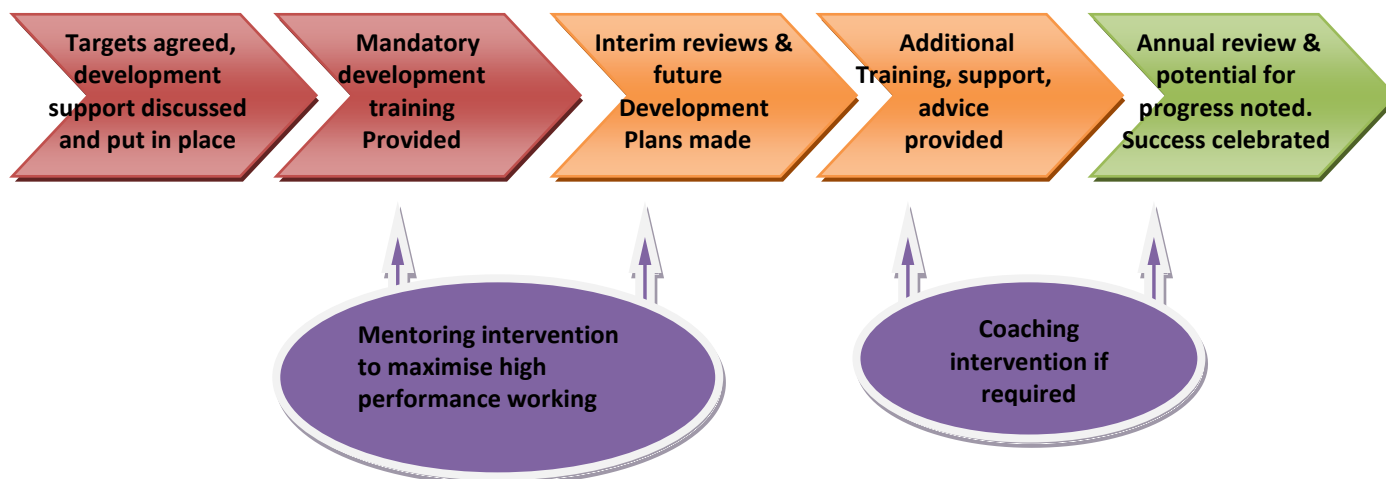
It was shown how evaluation informed future planning, including monitoring staff development measures, effectiveness of systems and procedures and achievements against other educational norms.

In terms of evaluating the impact, there was evidence to show that the leadership team had an understanding of the costs and benefits of learning and development. For example, they were aware of costs in time and resources and could point to dividends in terms of growth, capability, flexible workforce, and improving capacity for the future success of the School.

*“The School is not happy to stand still, they are always looking forward and celebrating success which makes me feel great to part of it.”*

### Coaching and mentoring is part of the culture.

The model below shows one approach the School has used and this model could be adapted to reflect their approach to leadership development, and project development. It is important that people understand the differences between mentoring and coaching so the most appropriate and timely intervention is utilised for maximum benefit.





At the time of the review the School has already started to work on a mentoring model and is in the process of being developed.

**Objective - Do the vision and values need to be updated. Identify what is currently understood and suggest a way to revitalise, reflecting the current aspirations and ambition's for the school**

### Vision and values which reflect the current aspirations and ambitions for the school.

#### Identification of vision and values for the school.

The existing school vision has been in place for some years and the Head Teacher has plans to revisit this in the lights of the Schools current successes and the Educational priorities and trends nationally. This will be an excellent opportunity to identify the values which underpin this vision so they can be explicit within the Schools strategies and in how the team works.

#### Strong values in place which people identify with and can relate to what they mean to them in their day to day activities.

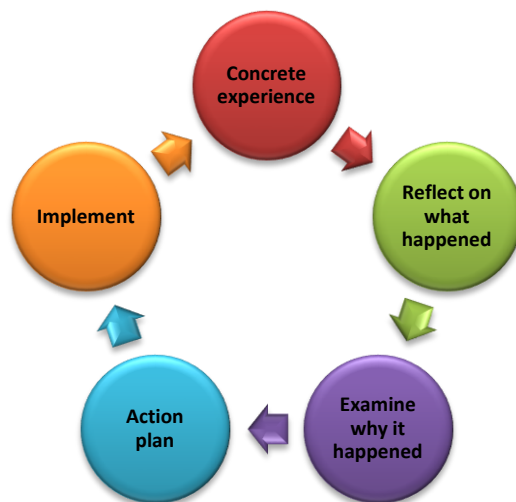
In discussion with team members there were values in place about how Kilgarth School did things and what was important in how they worked, however they were implicit and as such there was a variation in understanding and identification of the core values people identified with.

By clarifying these values and integrating them throughout the schools' approach and strategies will further enhance and unify the direction of travel.

### Other observations

#### Management effectiveness

As mentioned previously strong leadership and management existed within the organisation and good use of Kolb's experiential learning cycle was used by management in a structured manner.



Built into the business planning process and daily activities Kilgarth was constantly reflecting on its approach, implementing new methodologies (where needed) and ensured that staff 'buy in' was achieved in relation to taking the School forward,

Examples were provided of what staff believed constituted effective management including providing guidance, motivating, delegating responsibilities, being a positive role model and on the job development, all of which they could relate to their line manager.

Current specific examples of the managers being effective included clear communication, redefining the expected standards, sharing development opportunities, team training activities and

some described how they had received feedback and coaching themselves which had been valuable to them.

*“My line manager is fantastic, they are fair, they listen, understand and always encourage us to do new things”.*

*“All the managers are approachable, helpful, learner focused, have an open door policy and I’m never made to feel silly for asking something.”*

## **Leadership –**

Distributed leadership is relatively new to the school and is clearly evident throughout all areas of the School where through the cascade of targets and responsibilities, all staff were able to describe the priorities and their lead person.

To take leadership to the next level, Leaders and managers would benefit from understanding what good practice is, and developing their conscious competence so that they can achieve higher levels of self-awareness, self-management, personal reflection and effectiveness.

While managers have clear understanding of their role through their job descriptions and the cascade of priorities from the School development plan; the capabilities with how they undertake their roles could be further enhanced.

The capabilities can also support in performance management, professional development, career planning, as well as recruitment and development at all levels. The wider framework suggests that capabilities are defined and clearly understood by all staff for now and in the future to reflect the changing needs for how leaders and managers will need to further their skills, responding to anticipated changes.

*“The Head is not afraid to challenge for the greater good of the children”*

*“The leadership is upbeat, moving forward, dynamic, open to ideas, leading by example, hands on.....”*

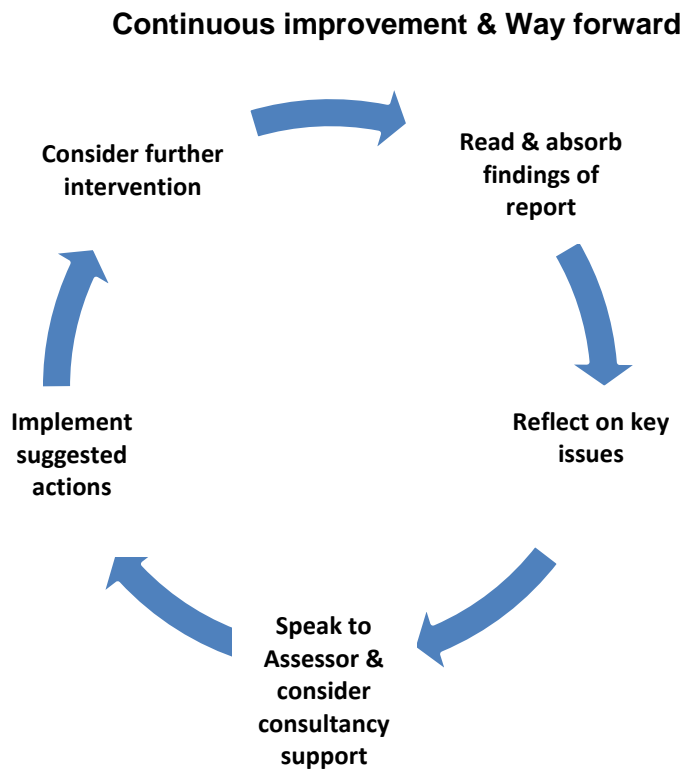
NB – in line with the new ways of working with Investors in People there will be a chargeable contact in 18 months’ time. This contact will be an agreement between yourselves and the assessor, and based around your needs and the priorities of Kilgarth School.

Possible opportunities might be

1. A workshop with the Leadership team.
2. Helping to develop the leadership capabilities
3. Coaching session with a senior manager
4. Attending an idg workshop
5. Review of the coaching and mentoring model set up

These are only examples based on our conversations; by September 2014 you may have other things you wish to discuss further.

## Conclusion



I would like to congratulate Kilgarth School on its achievement with Investors in People.

The Assessor would like to thank Ann for the excellent organisation of the review and the materials available. Thanks also to all the team for being very welcoming, and honest in their discussions with me.

It was a pleasure to undertake this assessment and Kilgarth School should congratulate itself on how it is striving to make as much impact on the lives of the boys it deals with and creating a more positive outcomes and opportunities for their future lives. It was clearly evident the staff were happy in their roles and have a great passion and commitment to improving the outcomes for those within their care, their families and the wider community.

The opportunities provided by the Standard are now much more flexible and I look forward to working with you in the future to maximise the potential.

Heather Beattie  
Investors in People specialist  
15<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Contact Details:  
2, Swanley Cottage,  
Swanley by Burland  
Nantwich  
Cheshire  
CW5 8QD  
Telephone 01270 524144  
Mobile 07762 218182  
Email [heatherbeattie@btinternet.com](mailto:heatherbeattie@btinternet.com)

## Continuous Improvement Plan – draft to be discussed April 2013

Business Issue	Suggested Action(s)	Potential Benefits / Impact of Taking No Action	Suggested Priority Level	Potential Solutions / Support Available
What	How	Why	When	Who
Define the core values to make more explicit.	In consultation with the team review and define the core values.	Benefits: Ensure a consistent understanding of how people will carry out their roles.	1	<p><b>Client to:</b> Access tools and templates (e.g. management skills matrix) on <b>iIP Interactive</b> as well as hints and tips for managing staff effectively, which can be found by logging onto: <a href="http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk">www.investorsinpeople.co.uk</a></p> <p>Materials off websites can be used to assist in supporting change and the self-development of managers.</p> <p><b>Assessor to :</b> Research capabilities and bring a few examples to the CIP meeting Discuss any consultancy support the centre can offer to further these recommendations</p> <p><b>idg to</b> Send further details - leadership and management funding - workshop opportunities</p>
Define the capabilities of the leadership team for the future	Define generic behaviours for future leaders	Integrated with other strategies will support recruitment, professional development, performance management, etc	2	
Coaching v mentoring	Review the difference between coaching and mentoring to identify most appropriate method for intervention.	Development and Career opportunities.	3	
	Mentoring programme open access for those enhancing their careers	Devolving responsibility to key members of the team Creating self-managed teams Creativity and innovation. Effective use of time Enhance communications Strengthening team dynamics	1	
Leadership into the future Identify ways for further improvement to leadership style and maximising the contributions of the wider team.	Review the team roles within the management team to enhance understanding and identify any missing characteristics.	as the needs of the School change. Ability to qualify improvements to how people understand improvements have been made to how they are managed and developed. Succession planning	1	
		Identify ways for further improvement to leadership style and maximising the contributions of the wider team	2	
Review of people's perception of how they are managed	Put into place measures to monitor and understand people's views of how they are managed			



**APPENDIX**

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE FEEDBACK MATRIX**

Evidence Requirements assessed were as follows: Traffic lighted (Red, Amber and Green)  
(The Standard)

The Standard – Evidence Requirements										
ER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	D	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
4	√	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√
5	√	√	√	√	√	N/A	√	√	√	√
6	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	D
7	D	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
8	√	√	√	D	D	X	√	√	√	√
9	√	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√
10	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
11	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
12	√	√	√	D	√	X	√	√	√	D
13	D	√	√	D	√	√	√	√	√	√
14	√	√	√		√	N/A	√	√	√	√
15	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√
16	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		
17	X	√	√		√	√	√	√		
18	√		√		√	X	√	√		
19	X		√		D	√	√	√		
20	√		√		√			√		
21	√		√		√					
22	√		√		√					
23	X		√		√					
24	√		√		√					
25	√		√		D					
26			√							
27			√							
28			√							
29			√							

Key:

√	Evidence Requirement Met		D	Met with Development Opportunity
X	Further Evidence Required			Evidence Requirement Not Assessed