



What can S7 do for you?

Pursuing excellence through collaboration

www.s7colleges.com

S7 NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2012

- Do you have any news or a forthcoming event which would be of interest to S7 colleagues? Contact Sharon Kemp at s7enquiries@gmail.com and we will add it to the next newsletter and the S7 website.
- The S7 newsletter will be published twice a year, in February and October.

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A Note from the Chair

S7 as a consortium in its current form is ten years old this year. I don't think there will be major birthday celebrations (we can't afford it), but we can be quietly proud of what we have achieved in that time. S7 provides a whole range of staff-development and good-practice sharing events which are well-established and very successful. These include: leadership programmes, departmental visits and exchanges, the June Teaching and Learning Conference, Teachers' Toolkit for NQTs, Aspiring and New HoDs days, one-off training events, plus thirteen different networks for cross-college managers.

There's no doubt in my mind that we have learnt a lot from each other ultimately to the benefit of students.

In addition, S7 is recognised as the representative group for sixth form colleges in Surrey and as such we have been able to influence educational developments in the county. We are recognised nationally both within the family of sixth form colleges and in government as a cutting edge example of what high quality collaboration is all about.

Of course, when we started off there were seven sixth form

colleges in Surrey and now there are five, with Farnham and Spelthorne having merged with GFEs, but we are now starting to work more closely with the four Sussex sixth form colleges and one day this could mean that S7, which was once seven and is now really S5, becomes S9. We shall see!

David Adelman, Chair of S7



Who is S7?

S7, the Consortium of Surrey Sixth Form Colleges, is all staff and students from Godalming, Esher, Reigate, Strode's and Woking Colleges, but who is behind the day-to-day work of S7? It is not an outside agency but is run by staff employed by the colleges themselves:

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Anna and Sharon organise almost all the Professional Development and Training for the colleges at

enormously reduced cost, often staffed by our own senior managers and totally bespoke to sixth form college education. It is also demand driven, so we do not spend money on courses we no longer need, but can put in



new ones when the Colleges feel that further training is necessary.

S7 also organise meetings of staff across the colleges, enabling them to share good practice and expertise and save each other time

and money. Currently, fifteen groups meet on a regular basis and more are being formed as we speak.

S7 also bids for money from various agencies to do projects within the colleges and has been extremely successful in gaining funding over the last few years; they then co-ordinate the projects.

S7 is a corporate voice with which to lobby outside agencies including exam boards, the Local Authority and Government departments. We have also spoken at National Events.

The Surrey's Got Talent Competition and the annual Student Council Training day are also organised for students.

New Senior Leadership Programme

For several years S7 has run a very successful five day middle managers' training programme. From June 2012 we will be introducing a six day Senior Managers' training programme,

which will include the work shadowing of a Senior Manager in another S7 College. Places will be limited to ten, and you must be at least at Head of Faculty level or equivalent, so speak to

your Staff Development Manager if you are interested. Further information will be posted on the S7 website soon.



Exam Boards

Recently, as a consortium, we have had extremely fruitful discussions with exam boards to gain reduced entry fees and more training from them.

Support Staff Conference

Following on from last year's very successful Teaching and Learning Conference at Royal Holloway, we will be organising a Support Staff Conference on July 3rd 2012 .

Visits and Exchanges

"This is a great service to offer. "

"As a trainee teacher it feels good to know that there is life outside of my college and that there are other ways to approach my subject. "

"I benefited immensely from visiting Reigate Sociology department. "

Taken from evaluations following visits undertaken by S7 staff

Numerous visits and exchanges have taken place amongst S7 staff in the past five years and the feedback is extremely positive, a snippet of which can be seen to the left.

If you would like to visit a department in another college to look at a specific issue or arrange an exchange with them, you are welcome to do so through the Consortium Officer, Sharon Kemp.



Surrey Skills Fair

On February 23rd and 24th we will have an S7 Consortium presence at the Surrey Skills Fair to raise awareness of the excellent work done in the Sixth Form College sector in Surrey.

Spreading our wings across the country

From September 2011 we started to work more proactively with the Sussex Sixth Form Colleges. This brings us new ideas and ways of working and more support for the Sixth Form Sector as a whole. We also have very positive links with the Hampshire Partnership, Cenbase (the Midlands Consortium) and we have also recently been approached by Norvic (the Consortium of Northern Colleges).