

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 12th November 2012

ITEM 7(j)

Title: Peer tutoring programme for secondary schools

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member(s): David Lilly

Report from Directorate: Children, Young People and Learning

Report Author: Jean Griffiths, Head of Schools, Learning and Skills (Tel: 643 8782)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The report outlines the details of a grant for funding from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) of £520,064 (subject to contract and final sign off) and seeks Cabinet's agreement for acceptance of this grant for the following purposes:: to work jointly with higher education partners to offer peer tutoring interventions to secondary schools in North Tyneside, to evaluate impact and to ensure knowledge exchange and sustainability beyond the life of the project across the borough on a traded bases.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) Agree (subject to contract and final EEF signoff) acceptance of grant funding from the Education and Endowment Foundation for the purposes set out in this report.
- (2) Authorise the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Learning to take all necessary or relevant steps to implement the above recommendation and the proposals described in this report;
- (3) Authorise the Head of Legal, Governance and Commercial Services and the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources to agree and finalise the terms and conditions associated with the grant and the project as described in the report;
- (4) Authorise the Head of Legal, Governance and Commercial Services to enter into all associated agreements on behalf of the Council.

1.3 Forward plan:

This report is listed on the Forward Plan published on 10th October 2012.

1.4 Council plan, policy framework:

This report is relevant to the following priority in the Council Strategic Plan 2012-15:

Priority 2: Maintaining excellent education, training and employment opportunities, including apprenticeships and working in collaboration with partners.

1.5 Information:

Schools in North Tyneside have been encouraged to see the value of peer tutoring arrangements where pupils form partnerships in which one pupil, because of age or experience, becomes the 'expert'. Previously, several schools have engaged in peer tutoring schemes which involved sixth form students tutoring upper primary school children in order to improve their reading skills. Anecdotal evidence gained during these programmes illustrated that not only did pupils improve their reading skills but also felt more confident about transferring to the secondary phase of their education.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has now approved a grant of £520,064 (subject to contract and final sign off) from the Literacy Catch-up Fund to undertake a more extensive project outlined below:

The initial focus of this project is to enhance the learning outcomes and social relationships of students with low literacy levels in North Tyneside. A particular focus of this project is vulnerable groups such as those in receipt of Free School Meals and those underachieving in literacy who are not in this category. The project will run in secondary schools. Cross-age peer tutoring, where older students tutor younger ones, in reading is an effective intervention for **all** students and therefore it will be offered to full classes thus widening its benefits and avoiding the stigmatisation of particular individuals. Evidence from small scale national and international studies demonstrate that cognitive, affective and social gains can be made in paired reading and this project offers an opportunity to scale the findings from previous studies using this technique.

Project aims:

Improved outcomes in reading and inclusion for all young people in secondary schools using cross-age peer-tutoring.

Project objectives:

To work jointly with higher education partners from Queen's University, Belfast and Durham University to design, undertake and evaluate a 3 year intervention in schools using cross-age peer tutoring to improve students' Literacy skills as well as their social relationships. The project is composed of three phases:

- *Phase 1 – 2013 Pilot*

This phase will include 3 schools and a total of 360 students (Y7 and Y9).

During this phase materials will be tested and reviewed, teachers trained and supported to deliver peer-tutoring, and students will engage in peer tutoring and be assessed for progress. The learning from this phase will guide Phase 2.

- *Phase 2 - 2013/14 – Randomized Controlled Trial*
This phase will include around 10 schools and a total of 3240 students (Y7 and Y9). Staff will be fully trained and supported to engage their class in peer tutoring and students will be assessed for progress. During this phase half the students will receive the intervention and half will act as the control group (assigned at the class level).
- *Phase 3 – 2014/15 – Follow-up assessment and knowledge exchange*
The final phase will include further training of staff to engage students in peer tutoring who were part of the control group in Phase 2. Furthermore, Phase 3 will include follow up assessments of the intervention in 2013/14, and the development of materials and dissemination to ensure the sustainability of cross-age peer tutoring in North Tyneside following the completion of this project.

1.6 Decision options:

Cabinet may:

Option 1

Approve the recommendations as set out in section 1.2 of this report.

Option 2

Not to approve the recommendations as set out in section 1.2 of this report.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is the recommended option.

This would ensure that schools benefit from considerable staff training in the methodology of cross-age peer tutoring and 3600 students engage in cross-age peer tutoring across the borough, which as previous studies indicate, leads to improved outcomes for students and is especially beneficial for vulnerable groups.

This project offers an opportunity for North Tyneside to become an established centre of excellence in cross-age peer tutoring using paired reading with Year 7 students, providing a template for others in England. Establishing a robust capability such as this will enable the Local Authority to offer support within the borough and beyond on a traded basis. Appropriate authorisation would be sought as required prior to entering into any such trading activity.

1.8 Appendices:

None.

1.9 Contact officers:

Maria Cockerill, Health and Wellbeing Adviser 0191 643 8546
Jean Griffiths, Head of Schools Learning and Skills 0191 643 8782
Anthony Gollings, Financial Business Manager for CYP&L and Finance & Resources, tel.

1.10 Background information:

None.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

Cabinet authority is required for the acceptance of grant funding in excess of £500,000. The grant application is for £520,064 over 4 years starting 2012/13. This grant (subject to contract and final sign off) would fund all costs associated with the project (including partnering organisations).

There are no additional Council resource implications.

2.2 Legal

The grant and other contracts associated with the project will be finalised on terms and conditions agreed by the Head of Legal, Governance and Commercial Services.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation has taken place with internal partners and at headteacher meetings and school leaders focus groups. Those consulted were all in favour of the initiative.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

Equality and diversity issues will be fully considered and addressed as part of the EFA application process. The programme will demonstrate a commitment to ensuring equal access and opportunity to take part in the peer tutoring scheme.

2.6 Risk management

Any associated risk of accepting the grant funding will be considered in the delivery stage.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director(s)
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategy Manager Policy & Partnerships

Report author..... Jean Griffiths...Head of Schools, Learning and Skills
Maria Cockerill, Health and Wellbeing Adviser