

Evaluations of Pilot Aspiring Senior Leaders' Course 7 – 8th July 2008

- After shadowing two deputy heads at two different schools, we were invited to take part in a two day mock interview. I agreed to take part. I wasn't really that keen but I knew the practice would do me good. What I didn't realise was that I would learn a lot, not just about myself and how others saw me, but also what goes on behind the scenes in a two day interview.
- If anyone is serious about joining the senior leadership team, I would definitely recommend the mock interview. The panel is made up from Head Teachers, Deputies, Governors and sixth forms. At the start of the day you are asked to gather information about the school from various groups. In the afternoon these groups interview you. Day two you are asked to give a presentation to a panel and then a formal interview.
- Day 1 feedback is given verbally and also written, they pay attention to how you present yourself and your manner, how others see you and how well you've done in the tasks, interviews and the gathering information exercise.
- After the presentation and formal interview you get verbal feedback from the whole panel, and how your performance compares to day one.
- It is well worth the effort! They even video your presentation and formal interview. I'm sure that will make interesting viewing.

Debbie Usoro

- Throughout the two days we were put through a series of tasks, both as group activities and on an individual basis, which as near as one could possibly imagine resembled a 'live' interview experience that could be expected at this level. The event was extremely well organised and planned and without question felt like the real deal! The candidates responded in both a positive and competitive way, indeed at times it felt more like 'Teachers does the Apprentice' rather than a training exercise, though this just added to the sense of reality.
- At the end of the exercise the candidates were given both written and verbal feedback of their performance throughout the two days. The feedback was thorough and informative and we were able to compare the facilitators' findings with our own self evaluation, which proved a very interesting and again informative task.
- Undoubtedly, by its very nature, the course can only put those who attended in a much stronger position to be prepared for an interview at this level. Viewed however, purely as a developmental tool, the intensity of the course, perhaps more than any other exercise could, exposes one's shortcomings and highlights strengths in respect to moving up to the next level, therefore giving the candidates' clear areas of focus for the future.

What I feel could be developed:-

- Personally I would have benefited from a pre-course workshop - perhaps a month in advance - that focussed on such things as letters of application and interview techniques, rather than purely evaluating our performance post task.
- This is a course that for me has involved a lot of personal reflection, it potentially could have a very powerful influence on future career decisions that I may take. I would like to see some form of post course guidance built in, where after a period of time to reflect the candidates are able to discuss with someone issues that have arisen from the Course.
- Lastly I would like to thank Lesley, Denise, Graham, Paul and everybody else involved in organising this event.

Joe Mulligan

- The Aspiring Senior Leaders Course was an excellent two days showing in detail the stresses and strains of a two-day interview process, something I had never experienced, and the variety of tasks included clearly mirrored those which would have to be undertaken. The tasks over the two days split into written and interview tasks and I felt that a little more feedback could have come for the written tasks as they felt a little like fillers, unless this is what they are in the real process!!! Everyone played their part very well from students to governors and I was particularly impressed with the 6th Formers from Gordano.
- Feedback on the CV and Letter was good but brief and I think colleagues felt that a session on writing letters would have been useful. Overall I found the course extremely helpful in my wish to move on in my career and I certainly feel more confident now in making the next step. I did not think a 'prize' was necessary and in many ways the award of the job seemed a little unrealistic as the feedback gave us the information we needed. It was also a little false as no 'cut' was made at the end of Day 1.
- All in all an excellent two days and a pleasure to speak to colleagues and share experiences and good practice

Martin Sills
