

St Albans Area: Guiding Principles and “that means” statements

Introduction

Through a two-part 2020 workshop, St Albans heads and other school representatives worked together to build consensus and deepen their understanding of the ‘learning experiences’ which will define the core of Hertfordshire and individual schools’ Educational Vision. This led them to generate a set of organising guiding principles that will help define that Vision and how it is realised.

In addition to agreeing a set of guiding principles and challenge statements, Part two of the workshop enabled them to check that they had shared understanding of the meaning and implications of theirs and Stevenage’s principles.

Agreeing Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles were generated and agreed by participants:

- Principle 1: Our local community will have high quality local education provision from cradle to grave
- Principle 2: Parents have the right to expect a high quality education
- Principle 3: All learners will enjoy their learning experience
- Principle 4: All learners will have the opportunity to experience success
- Principle 5: Schools in St Albans/Herts will work together to provide the best possible learning experience for the whole community
- Principle 6: Schools will offer a truly personalised curriculum
- Principle 7: The curriculum will continue to evolve
- Principle 8: All learners will be entitled to have ownership of their learning
- Principle 9: Parents will feel that they are partners in the learning process
- Principle 10: All learners will be entitled to a curriculum which shows innovative use of leading edge technology
- Principle 11: Pupils and professionals embrace difference and challenge tolerance
- Principle 12: Schools are part of the community and need to deliver a service that is co-produced with all parts of the community

Participants discussed these principles and there was consensus that some of them are ‘actually principles’ and may sit better with ‘that means’ statements.

Review of St Albans’ and Stevenage’s Principles

Participants reviewed the principles generated by St Albans and Stevenage. The list of St Albans principles was further reduced to five highline principles which were further analysed in Activity 4. There was agreement with all seven Stevenage’s principles. Five of these principles received very strong support. These are:

Principle 2: Our curriculum and learning experience will be personalised, flexible, relevant, rich and stimulating with breadth and depth of choice

Principle 3: We want our learners to acquire the qualities, skills and competencies for life that have a currency with employers, FE and HE providers

Principle 4: Our vision will be values-led and inclusive

Principle 5: Schools are the heart of our community and will lead in delivering services to meet community needs and interests

Principle 7: Schools will be flexible, sustainable organisations that support the learning experience for all

Further Analysis of St Albans's Principles

In addition, participants analysed five highline principles out of the twelve they had generated and agreed (including one Stevenage principle) and uncovered their implications. These are set out below with each principle that was articulated by the group set out in bold and statements that describe what 'that means' in practice organised beneath it.

Principle 1: Our vision will be values-led and inclusive. That means

- All learners will have an initial assessment leading to an ILP
- Review and change of learning programmes is the basis of their individual development
- Every child will have access to support that meets their needs
- We will help change the aspirations of certain groups, including parents and teachers
- We will remove artificial barriers that prevent the achievement of individual goals

Principle 2: Schools in St Albans/Harpenden will work together to provide the best possible learning experience for the whole community. That means

- We will share expertise and resources more widely
- Leaders will trust one another and work together for the good of the local community
- Students will be able to attend a local school of their choice
- We will change the governance structure to focus on what the whole community needs rather than the school

Principle 3: All learners will be entitled to have ownership of their learning. That means.....

- We will provide high quality information and guidance
- Staff will have to be more flexible and respond to need and change
- We will extend the curriculum to include the appreciation of skills to manage their learning and learning how to learn

Principle 4: Schools are part of the community and need to deliver a service that is co-produced with all parts of the community. That means.....

- We will need to change how schools are managed
- We will review the role of headteachers to accommodate the changing needs of leading a school and serving the community
- Our schools will work more closely with the local community i.e. form 'real' partnerships
- Our schools will encourage the joint use of their facilities
- Our schools will provide a range of services with other local schools

Principle 5: Pupils and professionals will embrace difference and challenge intolerance. That means..... (This could not be further analysed due to time constraint)

Issues: What education system/learning experience will enable young people acquire the 2020 skills & qualities? What needs to change?

Some of the changes suggested did not focus on 'what we need to do'. If we are to encourage new ways of learning and teaching, we need to understand what these ways of learning and teaching are.