

Newton Farm First and Middle School

Rayners Lane, Harrow
www.newtonfarm.harrow.sch.uk

Age range: 3 to 12 years

Number of pupils: 360

Self-review framework lead:
Rekha Bhakoo, headteacher

Self-review framework completed:
3 days over 4 weeks

Undertaking Becta's self-review framework instantly inspired headteacher Rekha Bhakoo to work to meet the changing ICT needs of the school's local community. During the past two years Tamil and Somali communities in the catchment area have grown rapidly and, as soon as the self-review framework process was complete, Rekha set up a series of ICT workshops to help parents integrate with the school and support their children's learning.

She said: "It was a direct result of completing the self-review framework – we realised that the changing nature of the intake meant that we had to respond to the needs of parents whose first language wasn't English. We sent out a questionnaire in several languages and the response was marvellous. The exercise was vital for us to maintain standards at the school and continue to progress."

The school completed the self-review framework in four weeks. During this time seven staff (out of a total of 38) were involved, working on it intensely for two days during school time and one day out of hours.

Rekha said that, although there was general consensus among staff about the level that school had reached in each element, there were many questions asked about the whereabouts of evidence.

Sources used for evidence included data on ICT performance and pupil achievement; trackers of each pupil's achievement; the school's improvement plan; monitoring and evaluation forms; parent, pupil and staff questionnaires; evaluation from training sessions; governor feedback; school policy; and external validation.

Rekha added: "That was very positive, because younger members of staff were asking more established members: 'Where is the evidence to support this statement and what is the impact?' It brought the team closer together and now they are not frightened or nervous of challenging each other. So, as a result, this process has really improved and strengthened communication. Sometimes we can get complacent about where to find information and the process clarified the way we all do this. Staff are now talking about their own practice in a very animated way."

She said that the self-review framework had given her, as school leader, the confidence to know that the school was moving in the right direction and had also made clear to her that there was still a long way to go in certain areas.

Rekha added: "To inspire others you have to have the courage of your convictions as the leader of a school and this has given me confidence. It has also reinforced the importance of ongoing training for the staff and I am far more focused on that as a result of the self-review framework."

"I would advise other school leaders planning to undertake the self-review framework that bedrock change requires time and commitment. Don't enter into it lightly."

