

Case study – WLPN

18/19 and Next Steps

19/20

- **Amanda Underwood**
- **All Saints RC School York**
- **Design & Technology Teacher**

What was the focus for your development/ Why did you want to take part in the programmes?

I have previous experience in Middle Management, as a Head of Year and Subject Leader and returning from Maternity leave, I saw the programme as an opportunity to explore career links between Subject and Pastoral and increase my confidence. I was also interested in the learning journey for different groups of pupils through KS3, 4 and 5 in Design and Technology, especially at a time of great change in the Curriculum. I felt the programme would help me network with colleagues from a range of Subject specialisms in different roles, inspiring new ideas.

Following the success of the first programme, I then very much wanted to be a part of the 'Next Steps' initiative, to gain a greater understanding of my personality profile, strengths and barriers, subsequently, understanding new strategies to lead others. I also hoped to review my Career options with increased awareness of well suited future pathways.

What impact have the programmes had on you?

I found being part of the WLPN initiative 18/19 immensely beneficial to my continuing professional development, both through networking with colleagues from varying backgrounds and experiences but also in questioning my own direction, strengths and areas for improvement. WLPN funding enabled me to visit other schools and explore how the SEND department operates and initiatives/activities to engage SEND learners. I subsequently did an audit of SEND learners in my own classes and developed strategies for supporting them. I also attended some GCSE D&T training where I was able to explore pupils learning journey from KS3 to 4 and how I could further support disadvantaged learners with the increased theory and coursework expectations. I am now involved in Teaching KS4 and KS5 Design and Technology.

During the Next Steps Programme, I found the opportunity to network with others, both face to face and virtually, incredibly beneficial as I could identify and relate to several colleagues in different ways, especially during a time of isolation. I continued the Coaching and I found the process a safe, reassuring platform to talk out strengths and current limitations, which have helped me feel more confident. I found again, I could relate to guest speakers and they gave practical advice about going for future opportunities. I found the structure of the programme flexible and achievable, even around the demands we faced in the Spring and Summer term and I always felt more positive after each session.

What do you know now that you didn't know before you started the programmes?

Some fantastic new colleagues! Also, as I hoped, clarity on my own management characteristics and strengths and a better understanding of strategies for working with others, especially those with different personality profiles. I reviewed my Career options and have increased awareness of well suited future pathways and the importance of taking the right opportunity for me, at the right time.

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What are your next steps?

I am trying to play a more proactive role in my current School setting and am looking for the next opportunity to challenge myself. I have more confidence going forward. I am interested in perhaps supporting Trainee Teachers and Facilitation opportunities outside of School. I have already shared practical strategies for applying for jobs with colleagues outside of School and I will try to implement the personality profile work in my everyday strategies for tackling barriers to success. I hope to be an advocate for the programme and for women in leadership by encouraging and supporting anyone approaching the next steps of their career with practical advice and have already talked about my positive experiences on the programme with the next cohort on WLPN. I also aim to model professional and proactive management qualities, whatever my job title.

How has EborHope TSA supported you in the programmes?

EborHope TSA supported a positive, approachable and organised facilitation of the programmes, providing a safe and efficient platform to develop and progress. Through EborHope TSA I continued Coaching and as already mentioned this has helped me feel more confident. It was reassuring that help and advice was always and is still available if I need it and for this I am very grateful.

What were the main benefits of doing the WLPN programme followed by the Next Steps programme?

Continuity and building stronger links with a range of diverse and inspirational individuals. I perhaps wasn't ready to answer some of the questions that arose in the first programme but over time and with the support provided by the programme, I certainly evolved in my thinking. I have also acquired increased practical strategies to move forward in my career and confidence and it felt both programmes collectively and the gradual, staged support and challenge only strengthened this.

In a sentence, what's the biggest piece of learning/insight you've had from the programmes that you'd like to share with others (SLT/colleagues, friends, male colleagues, female colleagues etc)?

Be proud of your journey and have the confidence to share it to help and inspire others. Accept help and be genuine, you do not have to change who you are to succeed, instead celebrate your strengths and understand your barriers to know that there are ways to overcome them.