



# Assessment report

## Five Acre Wood School

Project number: 18-02070

Accreditation valid from: 08/02/2019

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the staff who participated in this assessment through group and one to one discussions, and taking the time to complete the online assessment.

The warm and hospitable welcome was greatly appreciated, as was the willingness of people to share their experiences, thoughts, points of view and positive acknowledgement of people management and development practices within Five Acre Wood School. This allowed me to gain valuable insight and a good understanding of the people-based culture within the school.

My particular thanks goes to Nicola Devereax, HR Officer and Hayley Talbot, Head of HR for providing very helpful information before and during the site visit and for making me feel particularly welcome.

## Executive Summary

Five Acre Wood School was assessed for accreditation against the Investors in People Standard in February 2019, having achieved the Gold assessment level when first assessed in 2016. The assessment involved an initial context analysis and production of an assessment plan. Following this, the online assessment was administered to 249 members of staff, with 221 responding (89%). This is an excellent response rate and gave a very good indication of the staff perceptions around the culture and employment practices within the school. In addition, 12 people were interviewed from across the school. A thorough review of the extensive documentation provided was undertaken together with observation of training sessions, attendance at the Culture Group and a tour of the satellite site at Holmesdale school. As a result, we are delighted to accredit Five Acre Wood School with the Investors in People Gold Accreditation.

Five Acre Wood is an organisation that has a clear purpose, driven by leaders and managers who are passionate about the work they do and their ambition for the school, supported by capable, engaged and committed staff who share this passion. The school has a clear ambition for the future and is working hard to achieve this. Only the very best will do and everything that is done in the school is about putting the pupils first. As a result, Five Acre Wood is seen as a model of excellence and has achieved an Outstanding Ofsted rating.

It is apparent from the assessment and particularly from the consistently very positive results from the online assessment, that the staff feel Five Acre Wood is a great and happy place to work and that they are driven by the desire to do the very best for the pupils. Interviewees were able to cite many examples to confirm this, one person commented:

*'It is a real pleasure to come to work, I have not had a day when I have not wanted to come in'.*

The assessment revealed all indicators are met at the advanced level against the IIP Framework. The 'As is' heat map shows an organisation that is modest about its achievements and assumes the excellent culture and ways of operating are the norm. They are not and the SMT should fully recognise how good the school is (even if just briefly before working on the next improvement!). It is this desire and drive for excellence that will undoubtedly help take the school to the next level in the IIP journey. Clearly, Five Acre Wood has many strengths on which to build and develop to a high performing standard.

Particular strengths relate to the organisation's values and culture, which are well embedded across the school as a result of visionary leadership and careful recruitment to ensure full alignment with the values and culture. People feel empowered to make decisions and be creative and develop ideas to help improve the pupil's learning experience in the school. Staff also have appropriate control over the work they do and are stretched to develop and take on more responsibility, while being well supported by their manager. There are clear plans to ensure appropriate levels of management and senior leadership are in place with the right values, behaviours and skills to ensure it is able to retain the engagement and commitment of their people and take the school forward to meet future challenges. A range of different learning and development interventions are used to ensure this and includes; formal training, peer reviews, and coaching and mentoring. The online assessment supports the view that everyone interviewed is fully committed to the organisation and the pupils they support. In addition, the organisation is flexible and well-structured to further support the delivery of its ambition.

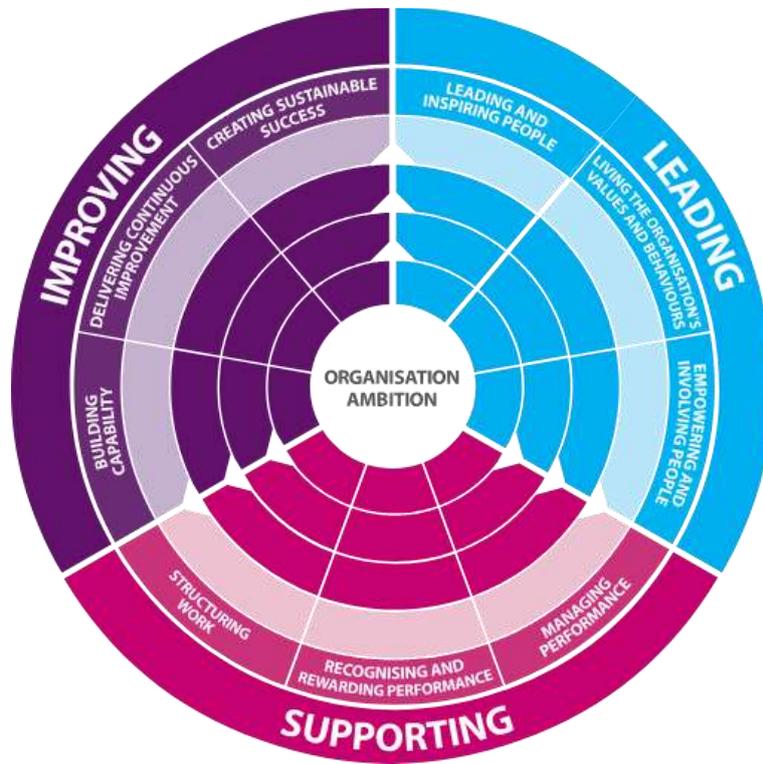
Particular strengths of the school are that it:

- Demonstrates supportive and effective leadership from a leadership team that is passionate, committed and knowledgeable,
- Presents a committed workforce who demonstrate their passion for the work they do and a desire to learn, develop and progress,
- Ensures their staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and provides a clear and supportive structure in which to operate,
- Encourages and welcomes ideas and suggestions in order to learn, continually develop and improve,
- Enables individuals to make appropriate decisions and provides support when things do not go as well as planned, there is not a 'blame culture' in the school,
- Has regular and effective communication and supervision arrangements in place,
- Encourages learning and development of its people in order that people can develop and grow,
- Has a clear understanding of the external environment, engages with other schools in order to share best practice and learn from others, and engages with companies for the benefit of the pupils (for work experience, bringing speakers into classes, musicians and dancers to the Woodstock festival etc.).

The assessment also provided recognition that further opportunities for development could be considered to continue to move towards excellence. In summary these include:

- The School Development Plans are comprehensive and well written. Consider how the key priorities identified in the plans can be captured and communicated to staff simply and clearly so individual objectives can be fully aligned with the school's strategic targets.
- Consider how all staff can be empowered and facilitated to take ownership for setting their own really stretching objectives that support and respond to Five Acre Wood's goals and future plans. This is clearly happening at the senior and middle staff levels, however more could be done to enable more junior staff to take similar ownership.
- Consider how peer to peer feedback can be extended across the school. This will support the already well established feedback mechanisms that take place between managers and their teams.
- Consider capturing the various benefits (financial and non-financial) and publicise regularly to staff.
- Capture and communicate the positive impact Five Acre Wood School has on the wider community and markets it serves.
- Staff at various levels are actively encouraged to engage with, and learn from other schools which has proved to be excellent learning for individuals and for Five Acre Wood. Consider similar engagement with private sector companies to widen experience and learning.

Five Acre Wood School assessment outcome



Five Acre Wood School final award outcome



## Context

Five Acre Wood School sought re-assessment against the Investors in People Standard after having achieved Gold accreditation 3 years ago in 2016 when it was assessed against the Generation 5 methodology. Five Acre Wood School is seeking to apply the IIP Framework as a key part of its developing people strategy aimed specifically at improving the organisation in order to help achieve its ambition of ensuring it gives the best possible education to all the pupils. This clear and unwavering ambition drives innovation and collaboration. The school has received many external awards and is rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

Five Acre Wood is operating in a difficult environment where demand for their services is much higher than capacity and at the same time the funding is barely adequate to provide the range of services and quality of education the school would like. Many discretionary but valued activities are supported by fundraising.

It is clear the SLT views the IIP accreditation process as a helpful benchmark of good practice, the opportunity to be credited where they meet the standard and more importantly, to receive feedback and ideas to ensure they are able to continue to strive for excellence. Achieving excellence by investing in the people of the school is seen as being fundamental to achieving the ambition of Five Acre Wood.

Organisations that meet the world-recognised Investors in People Standard reflect the very best in people management excellence. Underpinning the Standard is the Investors in People Framework. Based on 25 years of leading practice, the latest research and workplace trends, the Investors in People Framework is organised around nine key indicators of high performance each with three underpinning themes.

To achieve accreditation, organisations are assessed against these themes and indicators, leading to an award level of Standard, Silver, Gold or Platinum that represents the level of performance achieved, or the level of 'Performance', from a fundamental 'developed' level to 'high performing'. Assessment is carried out using surveys, interviews, meetings and observation. The approach taken in the assessment of Five Acre Wood is summarised in a later section of this report. The accreditation awarded represents the current level achieved and the Standard can be used to facilitate ongoing development of people management practices.

This report summarises the assessment of Five Acre Wood School and the level achieved.

## Organisation Overview

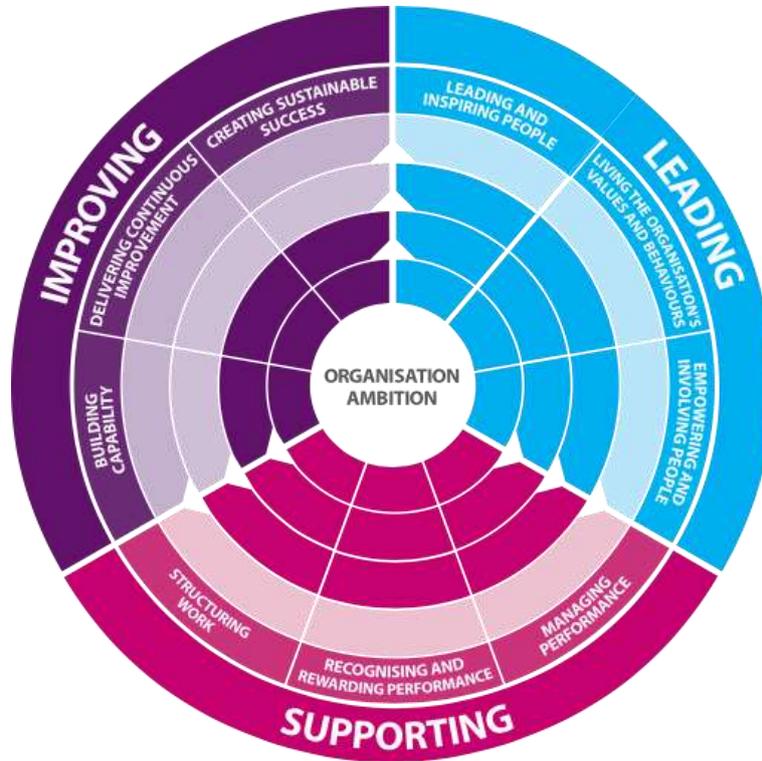
Having carefully considered the IIP Framework, the leadership of Five Acre Wood School undertook the questionnaire to develop the 'As Is' heat map (see below). This indicated they believe that they are operating at Silver (Established level) when compared to the Generation 6 standard. However, on further discussion with members of the leadership team, it is clear their view and understanding of where the school currently sits against the standard mirrors that of the assessment outcome i.e. Gold (Advanced level).

It is the constant drive for excellence and continuous improvement that make the school outstanding and a leader within its field.

The heat map below summarises where Five Acre Wood believes it currently sits against each of the nine IIP indicators. The shaded cells represent the maturity level against each indicator.

The more cells shaded, the more mature and embedded the practices are perceived to be within Five Acre Wood.

Five Acre Wood School 'As Is' heat map



## Assessment Approach

Following the initial Context discussion with Hayley Talbot, Head of HR, Nicola Devereax, HR Officer and Emma Athwal, Assistant Head at Five Acre Wood, from which details for the organisational analysis were elicited, the school was assessed primarily using the online assessment and interviews. However, a number of helpful documents were provided which gave strong underpinning evidence in many areas. Staff were informed of the IIP assessment and accreditation process by HR, when they were asked to take part in completing the online assessment and a possible interview. This gave time to deal with any questions or issues that staff raised. All staff were asked to complete the online assessment and support was given to make this easily accessible. 221 completed responses were returned (89%), indicating a very high level of engagement by staff. Returned online assessment responses represented all functions and levels of Five Acre Wood.

Online assessment responses were analysed to determine key themes or issues and these were used as one basis on which interviews were designed and administered. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 12 respondents, from all functions and levels, selected purposively because they were well placed to discuss IIP related issues. Each was interviewed either one-to-one or as part of one group of 3 who held the same roles, and confidentiality was assured. All interviews were in a private room. Interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and respondents appeared to willingly share and discuss their experiences and attitudes.

Observation activities were carried out including the observation of two training sessions, attendance at the Culture Group and a tour of Five Acre Wood's satellite site at the Holmesdale School.

Data on which the assessment was based included that derived from the online assessment and interviews, observations and a set of documents provided by the school. Documents provided included Five Acre Wood School's School Development Plan, examples of completed (but anonymised) performance review documents (TCP), school succession plan and leadership approach, Values documents, HR procedures including information about training, recruitment and appraisals, and information about the culture and approach to wellbeing in the school. This data proved extremely helpful in enabling the practitioner to develop a good understanding of the school.

### Survey Response Rate

#### Overview

TOTAL RESPONSES

221 responses out of 249 (89%)



RESPONSE METHOD



Email link: 221 responses out of 221

Open access: 0 responses out of 221

## How Five Acre Wood School was assessed



The online assessment was deployed to 249 employees and there was a response of 89%. This is considerably above the international Investors in People guidelines and therefore the sample is considered statistically significant.



Based on the findings from the online assessment, the IIP Practitioner interviewed 12 employees from across the organisation. In addition, background discussions took place with the Principal, the Head of HR and the HR Officer.



Observation included attendance at training sessions, attendance at the Culture Group and a tour of the satellite unit at Holmesdale school.



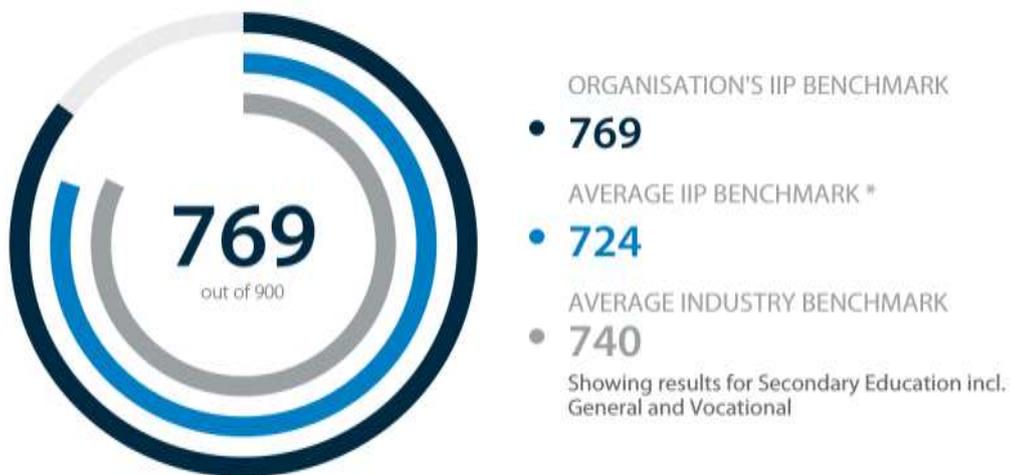
Analysis of key strategic documents, including the school development plan, training plans and documents relating to succession plans and leadership approach, values, recruitment, appraisals, culture and wellbeing.

## Detailed Assessment Outcome

### IIP Benchmark

The IIP Benchmark below shows Five Acre Wood's overall performance for the online assessment compared to the IIP average for all organisations who have completed the online assessment and against the average industry benchmark for 'Secondary education including general and vocational'. Please note this benchmark is based on live data and is correct as on 19/12/2018. It can be seen that the outcome of the Five Acre Wood School online assessment exceeds that of both the average IIP score and that of the industry benchmark.

### Benchmark



\* This reveals the average IIP Benchmark for all organisations who have undertaken the survey.

An overview of the results from Five Acre Wood School's online assessment can be found below and are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

## Overview of online assessment results

The table below shows how your employees responded to the online assessment for each indicator of the IIP Standard (including the average per indicator and the difference to other organisations that have completed the online assessment). The points difference to the industry average score can be found in Appendix 2.

### Indicator summary

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score	Difference from IP Average
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	37.8%	40.7%	12.8%	2.3%	2.4%	1.5%	2.6%	5.9	+0.4
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	49.3%	36.3%	6.3%	4.8%	1.0%	0.9%	1.4%	6.2	+0.3
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	40.2%	38.3%	13.5%	2.5%	1.8%	1.2%	2.5%	6	+0.2
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	48.0%	37.1%	6.3%	4.1%	1.7%	0.9%	1.9%	6.2	+0.4
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	22.2%	32.7%	22.7%	9.3%	3.2%	4.8%	5.2%	5.3	+0.2
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	50.0%	34.7%	9.7%	2.4%	1.1%	0.5%	1.6%	6.2	+0.4
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	35.9%	41.6%	12.1%	5.8%	1.2%	1.5%	1.8%	5.9	+0.4
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	37.3%	40.4%	12.2%	6.3%	0.9%	1.4%	1.5%	6	+0.4
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	47.6%	36.8%	8.9%	4.1%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%	6.2	+0.4

*NB: The Average Score is the average response from all employees who participated in the online assessment. To help interpret this score, number 7 represents a response of 'Strongly Agree', so the closer the Average Score is to 7, the more positively the result can be read. 4 is a neutral response.*

## Principle 1: Leading

The consistently high ratings against the indicators falling under this principle in the survey are very impressive. The majority of the themes scored over 90% agreement from staff (strongly agree, agree and somewhat agree). For indicator 1, Leading and inspiring people, it is clear staff feel strongly that leaders make the organisation's objectives clear and they inspire and motivate people to deliver against the objectives, and that the leaders are trusted by people in the organisation. Overall 91.3% of people agree with this. This is 0.2 points ahead of the benchmark for the sector (Secondary education including general and vocational) and 0.4 points ahead of the IIP average score. People spoke readily about supportive management:

*'I feel very, very supported. HR is very supportive. I feel I can go to anyone if I need support',*

*'All the SLT are really helpful. If there's a problem they are there to give support but they don't take over and undermine you',*

*'The SLT are great role models, they definitely practice what they preach and they don't expect us to do what they wouldn't do'.*

Many people spoke about not being afraid to ask questions and one commented that they felt members of the SLT would be offended if they thought anyone couldn't speak to them if they had a question or issue.

There appears to be a high and consistent level of two way communication at Five Acre Wood. All people interviewed spoke about the 'all staff meeting' held each Tuesday morning and of its value in keeping everyone appraised of what's happening, expectations and appropriate training, in particular safeguarding. Others spoke of the variety of other regular meetings that take place to ensure effective communication and engagement.

Most people interviewed spoke about the level of trust that is given to them and the ability to have some control over their role and to try new things. They spoke about the abiding principal that the pupils come first in everything, and therefore it was reported that as long as actions and ideas were taken forward with the pupils' best interest as the primary consideration, they felt supported. Many examples were given to demonstrate the high degree of trust vested in the staff. Examples included; setting up an equine centre; redesigning an outdoor area of a class room; fund raising events such as London to Brighton cycle ride and the Three Peaks; and, making the annual Woodstock festival the best it can be;

*'The SLT light a fire in you through training and then let you run with your ideas.'*

There is clear and razor sharp focus at the top of Five Acre Wood to achieve the school's primary objective. Everyone readily spoke about the driver that the students always come first. All were clear that the school's ambition is to be outstanding in all respects and that they see the passion and drive for this in the senior leaders. The majority spoke about being personally motivated by the vision and passion of the senior leaders and that it drives discretionary effort without expecting any additional reward. This is evidenced by 90.5% of people responding positively to the theme that they are motivated to deliver Five Acre Wood's objectives. This is 0.2 points above the industry average benchmark score and 0.4 points above the IIP average score.

*'There is a high degree of confidence in the SLT....I have never heard any bad feedback about them'.*

*'There is really high levels of confidence and trust in the SLT. I feel this is two-way in that they have confidence in me and trust me too'*

There is a clear understanding of the expectations of line managers at Five Acre Wood. While they are given autonomy and trust to operate with freedom, there is a clear understanding of what needs to be done and what is and what is not negotiable. This is set out in the Leadership Framework. People spoke about frequent, timely and appropriate feedback from their manager. This is evidenced by 88.7% of staff agreeing with the theme of developing leadership capability. With an online assessment score of 5.7, this exceeded the average industry benchmark score by 0.3 points and the IIP average score by 0.5 points.

It is clear that people at Five Acre Wood adopt the values of the school. Those interviewed spoke about the values being spoken about frequently and in particular at the all staff weekly meetings. Overall, there is a very impressive 91.9% agreement that people and leaders act in line with Five Acre Wood's values at all times. People spoke readily about the expectation that the school is one team and everyone and each role is highly valued. They spoke about the requirement and belief that respecting each other is essential and that positivity in everything that is done is core to how the school operates. To ensure these are embedded in the school and be part of the 'DNA', individuals are recruited with the values very much in mind, values and behaviours are discussed at induction and they are often referred to in all staff meetings. 92.8% of people agreed that Five Acre Wood operates in line with the values. This is a very positive score and 0.2 points ahead of the industry average score and 0.4 points ahead of the IIP average score.

*'Values are talked about at the all staff meetings on a Tuesday, usually when something has gone wrong and it is used as an example of what is expected'*

Without doubt, people at Five Acre Wood believe the values are adopted. This is evidenced by 96.1% of people agreeing with the theme that the values are adopted across the school. Everyone spoke openly about their high level of personal motivation to behave in line with the values. Several examples were given of where individuals had put themselves out for the benefit of the pupils (coming in during the holidays to redesign an outdoor area, setting up an equine centre, volunteering for residential trips, getting involved with the planning and staging of the Woodstock festival each year....to name a few) and that seeing the positive effect of this on the pupils was their primary motivator.

People strive to do the right things in accordance with the values which may not always be the most convenient. A number of examples were given to support this including being asked to support other teams when short of staff and agreeing to an additional half hour paid work per school day for teachers and teaching assistants to enable more planning time, despite the impact on the already stretched budget.

It is clear that there is a belief that the leaders of Five Acre Wood create a culture of openness and trust in the school. Many of the people interviewed spoke about feeling trusted and empowered in their role. Most people were able to confirm they behave in accordance with the values and spoke about team work, respecting colleagues and pupils, and always behaving positively.

*'Everyone knows how to behave'*

*'If staff did not behave in line with the values this would be dealt with and the starting point would be to try to understand why they had behaved in that way'*

While there is a comprehensive Leadership Framework in place that sets out clearly the expectations within roles and behaviours are referred to in the Personal Attributes document, there is an opportunity to integrate the values and behaviours so they are clearer. This does

not mean that people do not know how to behave. It is clear that behaviours are discussed and when poor behaviours are demonstrated they are dealt with. Some of the staff interviewed were not able to really point to where the expected behaviours are defined. 87.3% of people believe that Five Acre Wood lives the values. This is equal to that of the industry average benchmark and 0.2 points higher than the IIP average score.

There is a very strong belief by the people at Five Acre Wood that they feel empowered and involved, as overall there is 92% agreement with the indicator that there is a culture of trust and ownership in the organisation, where people feel empowered to make decisions and act on them. This is 0.2 points above both the average IIP and industry benchmark scores.

There were numerous examples expressed during the interviews that people are encouraged to take the lead and have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. Competent Teaching Assistants are able to step up and teach lessons when teachers are engaged in PPA (non-contact time). Middle managers have been given leadership training and an additional six days of leadership development has been provided with the tutor, to focus on the topics of particular interest to the group, not those directed by senior managers. Others spoke about being encouraged to establish external networks and using these contacts to visit other teaching establishments in order to learn new things. Several middle to senior leaders are engaged in peer reviews with other schools in order to learn and develop leadership qualities.

*'I've done so much CPD to develop my leadership skills, I feel very supported in this'.*

This is supported by 95% of the responses to the online assessment agreeing that Five Acre Wood empowers its people. This is 0.3 points higher than both the industry average benchmark and the IIP average score.

Many people interviewed believe they participate in decisions that have a direct impact on them and feel their contribution makes a difference.

*'We make decisions all the time – I'm asked and my opinions are taken on board',*

*'We don't get told what we must do – we are asked if we can accommodate it and if we can't we can say'.*

Many people interviewed spoke about the 'all staff meetings' and that staff are asked if they have questions or concerns. While in other environments this could be somewhat intimidating to speak in front of the whole school, it was reported that people feel comfortable asking questions and speaking out.

The online assessment scores for this theme are lower than others for the indicator Empowering and involving people, with 83.7% agreeing that there is a culture of participation and collaboration at Five Acre Wood. This theme scored lower than average IIP score at 0.1 points lower and equal to the industry benchmark average score. It may be helpful to consider why this is the case when other themes in the principal of Leading consistently score much higher.

It is clear there is a high degree of trust and support to enable people to make decisions about their work and there were a number of examples spoken about during the interviews. People spoke about managing budgets locally and deciding what they will spend it on. Another person spoke about having the freedom and autonomy to plan lessons and try new things without reference to a manager.

All spoke about the high level of information shared at the 'all staff meetings' and weekly planning meetings, so that people have the resources to make appropriate decisions. As

with all things undertaken at the school, the overriding requirement is that decisions taken must be in the best interest of the pupils. Many people spoke about how they are supported if decisions do not go as planned. All said they have been, or believe they would be, fully supported and encouraged to try again. No one spoke about a blame culture and indeed some confirmed they had never experienced blame in the school. A high number of people completing the online assessment agree, with 94.2% reporting that they agree they feel empowered to make and act on decisions. This is 0.3 point ahead of the industry benchmark average and 0.2 points ahead of the IIP average.

## Principle 2: Supporting

There is a clear culture of managing performance within Five Acre Wood. The indicator for Managing Performance overall scored 91.4% (6.2 points) agreement in the online assessment. This is 0.3 points higher than the industry average score and 0.4 points higher than the average IIP score.

It is clear people know what is expected of them and can see some linkage between their objectives and those of the school overall. All spoke about having stretching targets that are developed in consultation with their manager. Individuals have autonomy to decide what they want to focus on in the coming year and are able to develop objectives with their manager to achieve this.

*'My manager asks us to develop our objectives and she does too and then we work it out together'*

*'Objectives are set by me doing it first....I look at my job list and consider what I want to work on more. I then meet with my manager and agree what's going to happen'*

People spoke about a broad understanding of what Five Acre Wood is seeking to achieve, derived from information and discussions at meetings as well as access to the School Development Plan. This information helps guide the setting of individual objectives to ensure alignment. 91.4% of people completing the online assessment agreed that objectives are set and aligned with those of Five Acre Wood. This is 0.3 points above the industry benchmark average and 0.5 points above the IIP average. The School Development Plan is detailed, it may help staff more to provide a summary of key strategic actions to further aid integration with individual and team objectives.

It is clear that managers and leaders encourage high performance. Everyone interviewed spoke readily about the appraisal process (TCP) and that their manager has open, honest and constructive discussions with them, both as part of the formal process and on an ongoing informal basis. All spoke about how they are encouraged to perform at a higher level and most spoke about underperformance or poor behaviours being managed in a constructive and supportive way. There appears to be an excellent culture of coaching and mentoring in the school to ensure performance continually improves. Additionally, there is a strong culture of review and reflection to drive improvements. A part of this is the embeddedness of observing lessons by both leaders and peers. This is seen positively by the teachers and teaching assistants interviewed, who see it as an opportunity to learn from others when observing and being observed. It is apparent that only the very best will do and mediocrity in any form is not accepted.

There is a constant drive for excellence in all activities in order to provide the very best education and experience possible for the pupils. The people completing the online

assessment agree, with 90.2% confirming they agree that Five Acre Wood encourages high performance. This is 0.1 points above the industry benchmark average and 0.2 points above the IIP average. The focus on high performance has been recognised in many awards achieved by the school in recent years, not least achieving a rating of 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

*'There is a continuous striving for high performance in the school ..... but in everything we do we must put the pupils first',*

Performance is measured and assessed and used to improve the performance of both the people and the organisation. An impressive 93.7% of staff responding to the online assessment confirmed they agreed that Five Acre Wood measures and assesses performance. This is 0.5 points above the industry benchmark average and 0.7 points above the IIP average. There is a clear appraisal process in place where both performance and behaviours are reviewed. Performance is assessed against objectives and role requirements and behaviours against the Staff Development Guidelines and the statement of Personal Attributes. As part of the assessment, examples of completed (anonymised) appraisal documents were reviewed and found to be comprehensive and thorough, and providing the opportunity for formal feedback, in addition to the informal feedback that takes place regularly on the job.

*'My appraisal meetings are never rushed, I get plenty of opportunity to speak and the feedback I get is very valuable',*

*'My manager asks for feedback on how they are doing and how they could be even better'.*

The scores for the online assessment for the indicator Recognising and rewarding high performance, were lower than all other indicators with an overall score being 77.6% agreement. However, at 5.3 points this is still 0.2 points higher than both the IIP average and the industry benchmark average. The lowest score of all themes is that of staff believing there is a clear approach to recognition and reward, and that it is continually reviewed by leaders and is flexible and tailored to meet individual motivators. This theme scored 68.8% agreement which is equal to both the IIP average and the industry benchmark average scores.

*'The SLT are always very willing to say thank you',*

*'Being able to work at home is a real benefit and I feel very trusted'.*

People do feel there is a culture of adopting recognition in Five Acre Wood as 86.9% of people completing the online assessment agreed with this. This is 0.1 points ahead of both the IIP average and the industry benchmark average. What is surprising is that the people interviewed genuinely appreciate the small non-cash recognition and do not expect very much else.

One person spoke about being encouraged to take on additional responsibilities and then encouraged by a member of SLT to gather the evidence to enable them to move to the next pay threshold despite a very challenging budget. This was greatly appreciated.

It is clear that Five Acre Wood seeks to recognise and reward its people and this is felt by those completing the online assessment, as 77.4% agree with this. This is 0.3 points ahead of the industry benchmark average and 0.2 points ahead of the IIP average. The people interviewed also felt the school recognised and rewarded them and it was evident during the interviews. During the course of the interviews, many people talked about some rewards and benefits available, including flexibility in their role to attend children's events at their schools, an inexpensive uniform, focused training to help with development, being able to complete

the PPA from home, an extra day's leave on achieving Ofsted 'Outstanding', and 'thank yous' by senior leaders in recognition for doing a good job. Some staff did need to be prompted to think of some of these examples as benefits.

Many staff talked about their primary motivator in the role being able to see the impact of their hard work and seeing the pupils grow and develop.

*'Of course I'm motivated by rewards but I don't do it [the job] for the money, I do it because I love it and love working with the pupils,'*

*'It's doing a great job for the kids is what really motivates me'.*

An impressive 94.4% of staff agreed that Five Acre Wood is structured to deliver the school's ambition.

The people interviewed confirmed they have a job description and understand what they need to do to achieve their objectives and support the school to meet its objectives and ambition in broad terms. People spoke about being actively encouraged to train and develop in their role so they can progress within the school. People spoke about having interesting and varied work.

Teaching Assistants spoke about being able to teach in class when the teacher is engaged in other activities, teachers spoke about being able and encouraged to take on more responsibility and progress to middle management positions. Classroom based staff spoke about moving to different areas of the school each year so they can build a breadth of experience and skills and work with different colleagues in order to learn and share good practice. 94.3% of people completing the online assessment agreed that roles in Five Acre Wood are well designed to provide interesting work and help people to develop skills and capabilities needed for progression. This score is 0.2 points higher than the industry benchmark average and 0.4 points higher than the IIP average score.

*'My role is very flexible – I can learn on the job',*

*'Being able to teach as a SLA is great – I have really grown in confidence'.*

Five Acre Wood works hard to create autonomy within roles so that people are able to make appropriate decisions and take individual ownership. There is a clear suite of policies and procedures that are readily available to all staff on the shared IT system. The people interviewed confirmed they are made aware of any changes to these documents and these are discussed at the weekly 'all staff meetings' as appropriate. People spoke about the 'non-negotiables' in the school, with a clear understanding of what is mandatory and outside of this, staff are encouraged to take the initiative and make decisions appropriate to their role with the one caveat, that it must be in the best interest of the pupils.

94.1% of people agree that Five Acre Wood does create autonomy in roles, which is 0.2 points higher than both the industry benchmark and IIP average scores.

*'There is lots of training relating to the policies and so this is a good foundation for me doing my job',*

*'If I am not sure about anything I can ask so many people – I never have to worry'.*

There is a strong culture at Five Acre Wood of team work and collaboration with colleagues willingly to help each other and sharing knowledge and experience. 95% of staff completing the online assessment agreed with this. This scored 6.3 points which is 0.3 points ahead of the industry benchmark and 0.4 points ahead of the IIP average scores.

There were many examples given where this happens. Teaching Assistants moving classes each year to build experience, skills and networks; teachers coming together across Key

Stages to plan for the coming term and in doing so share ideas, best practice and resources; people working in other areas when short staffed; joining groups or committees to help plan events (i.e. the Woodstock festival).

There is open communication across the school with a range of meetings designed to impart knowledge, seek feedback and ideas, and share best practice.

Most people interviewed spoke about the SLT being open and straightforward with information and that this sets the tone for the rest of the school.

*'We are encouraged to work as a team and help each other out',  
'There are lots of opportunities to link with others across the school, if there are staff shortages we help out in other phases,'*

The online assessment agreement scores are consistently high for the Supporting Principle. Staff are clear about what is expected of them and they feel encouraged to perform at their best. They feel their performance is well managed and poor performance is addressed when it arises. People feel appropriately rewarded and recognised, and that the reward and recognition motivates them to do their best. The staff confirm that Five Acre Wood designs roles so that they can develop and that they can take ownership of their decisions. They also feel that the school has open communication channels and actively encourages collaboration, and that the tone from the top is clear, supportive and engenders trust and appreciation.

## Principle 3: Improving

Overall 89.6% of staff agree that Five Acre Wood actively manages and develops its people's capabilities and that this enables people to realise their full potential. Many examples were given during the interviews of training and development opportunities being provided which includes; comprehensive safeguarding briefings at the weekly 'all staff meetings', thorough induction training, comprehensive teacher training and leadership training. Considerable documentary evidence was provided to show the extensive range of training provided to help individuals perform at their best and develop in their roles. Two separate training sessions were attended on site by the IIP practitioner.

Five Acre Wood uses a variety of different ways to develop its people, including; group training sessions, on the job training, mentoring, coaching, undertaking peer reviews, walk-in observations of lessons and feedback, and networking and visiting other teaching establishments to experience best practice. One of the key strengths of the school is that it is highly reflective and takes every opportunity to reflect on what has gone well and what could be improved. Nothing appears to be taken for granted and there is a strong belief that irrespective of how good they are (Ofsted 'Outstanding' as an example) there is always something that can be learnt and improved. This practice is embedded on a weekly basis, with planning of lessons and activities for the week ahead taking place during 'class protected time' on a Monday morning and a reflection of what has gone well and what are the learning points on a Friday morning. Everyone interviewed spoke about the drive for constant improvement and that 'only the very best' is good enough.

*'There's lots of training happening in house and opportunities to learn',*

*'We always strive to be better. We celebrate success and then think - OK what else could we do to be even better'.*

90.7% of people believe Five Acre Wood has an understanding of people's potential. This is 0.4 points above the industry benchmark average and 0.5 points above the IIP average scores.

It is clear from the feedback that every opportunity is taken to enable people to achieve their full potential if they show promise and work hard. Examples of Teaching Assistants being developed to become senior Teaching Assistants and senior Teaching Assistants becoming qualified teachers, were given during the interviews. People also spoke about the considerable investment in middle managers in the form of leadership training being provided to help them perform at their best and progress within the school.

During the interviews, people spoke about being given advice and guidance around training from their managers and the HR team. People were also clear that they are encouraged to put into practice new skills and knowledge gained through learning and development. An example was given of a member of staff being trained in IT skills and then encouraged to use the new skills by undertaking different projects on the computer.

Recruitment and selection is seen as highly effective, with the key criteria for recruitment being to ensure alignment to attitudes, values and behaviours. Succession planning is considered, with managers engaged in giving feedback on their staff who are high performers and showing potential. Resource planning is a key activity within the HR team and this supports and enables the school to be clear about the resources it needs at any given time. The resource planning is also aided on a daily basis by having multi-skilled staff who have worked in different areas to be able to step in and provide support in times of staff shortage. This prevents the over reliance, at high cost, on 'bank' or supply staff, that many schools experience. Where possible, Five Acre Wood seek to develop and grow their own talent and where appropriate, promote from within. 81.9% of people completing the on-line assessment agree that the right people are deployed at the right times within the school.

Overall, 89.9% of staff responding to the online assessment agreed that Five Acre Wood is focused on continuous improvement. This scored 6.0 points for this indicator, which is 0.2 points above the industry benchmark and 0.4 points above the IIP average score.

A number of people in Five Acre Wood spoke about working with external organisations to share best practice and to learn from others. Many senior and middle managers are part of peer reviews where they are part of a group of schools undertaking reviews to identify best practice and learning. Many of the senior leaders are also part of network groups where they share knowledge and expertise freely and have the opportunity to learn from others. Some of the people interviewed spoke about forming personal networks with staff at other schools and being encouraged to visit and learn from initiatives they are undertaking.

Staff responding to the online survey believe strongly that Five Acre Wood school seeks to improve through internal and external sources with 95.5% of people agreeing with this statement. This scored a high 6.3 points and is 0.2 points above the industry benchmark average and 0.4 points above the IIP average points.

All people interviewed spoke about the supportive and enabling culture at Five Acre Wood. They confirmed that when mistakes are made, the attitude of leaders is that they seek to understand why the mistake has occurred in an inquisitive and supportive way and that they should learn from it so that mistakes are not repeated. All were clear that there isn't a blame culture within the school and that there is a genuine culture of helping people to improve.

However, many confirmed that while poor performance and behaviours are dealt with in a supportive way, persistent wrong-doing is not tolerated and is dealt with swiftly. Some staff spoke about a 'whistleblowing' route to the Principal where incompetence, poor behaviours or other issues can be readily escalated in confidence.

Everyone spoke about innovation and risk taking in a positive way. Innovation and reasonable risk taking is actively encouraged as long as it is considered and seeks to put the pupils first. Many examples were given including: bring ponies into school to engage with the pupils, this has led to an equine centre being set up in the coming months, the creation of an outdoor teaching area, and bringing external agencies in to speak to six form students (prison warden, STD nurse etc.). Everyone felt they could suggest new ideas and if they had merit they would be considered and implemented. Many spoke about a 'can-do attitude' and a school that has a 'glass half full' mentality. Many spoke about actively looking to find ways to do new things rather than seeking reasons why not to do things that appear at first glance too difficult.

*'Everyone is receptive to new ideas and suggestions – it's all about making things better for the students'*

*'I wouldn't hesitate to come up with new ideas – I suggested a new approach to teaching and was asked to provide training on it. As an NQT that is pretty amazing'*

88.6% of people completing the online assessment agree that Five Acre Wood encourages innovation. This scored 6 points and is 0.4 points above the industry benchmark and 0.6 points above the IIP average scores. Examples of groups established to create new ideas were discussed during the interviews, which included the Culture Group and the planning committee for the annual Woodstock music festival. The Culture Group was attended by the IIP practitioner and appeared to generate many good ideas that come from the staff.

All interviewed spoke about being encouraged to try new things and take reasonable risks. There is a strong culture of mentoring and coaching of staff so that they are stretched and supported to step outside their comfort zone in order to develop.

All the scores across indicator 9 - Creating sustainable success, scored highly with an overall score of 6.2 points and 93.3% of staff agreeing that the school has a focus to the future and is responsive to change.

All staff interviewed were broadly aware of the school's future priorities and felt engaged with short and long term planning. They confirmed that priorities and ambition for Five Acre Wood is discussed at the weekly all staff meeting and one to one meetings. Everyone spoke about how good Five Acre Wood is to work for and how supportive and engaged the leaders are.

*'It is a real pleasure to come to work, I have not had a day when I have not wanted to come in'*

*'I feel so lucky to be working here, I have been given such great opportunities'*

*'I love it here, everyone is so welcoming'*

Change is embraced in the school and treated as 'business as usual'. Change is communicated via the array of meetings that take place and where appropriate, it is communicated at the all staff weekly meetings. Successful change is openly discussed and congratulated. Failures tend to be discussed more locally with individuals directly involved although learning from failures will be discussed in the all staff meetings. The Culture Group consists of volunteers who are passionate about making a difference and engage with the

wider school to develop and take forward ideas and suggestions so that improvements can be made.

A very positive 96.3% of people responding to the online assessment confirmed that they agree Five Acre Wood understands the external context. Some people spoke clearly about the engagement with the wider community which includes a wide range of stake holders including parents, local businesses, local and national agencies, and other schools, to name but a few. Many of the senior leadership team are actively engaged in specialist groups and work to provide reciprocal peer reviews as well as being 'thought leaders' in their field.

The school engages actively in fundraising and many of the staff take part and work with local businesses to raise money for the school.

The online assessment scores for the principle of Improving are all consistently high and every indicator and theme scored above the industry benchmark average and the IIP average. People consistently feel that Five Acre Wood builds capability where people are able to reach their full potential and that the school has the right people at the right time in the right place. They feel there is not only focus but more importantly a high expectation of continuous improvement where their ideas are actively sought and acted upon where appropriate, and that it has a clear focus on the future and that the school is responsive to change. The staff also believe that the leaders of Five Acre Wood have a clear understanding of the external environment, engage with it actively and understand fully the impact this has on the school.

## Recommendations and Next Steps

It is clear that Five Acre Wood School has an excellent culture and a focused determination to continually improve in everything it does. As such, it has achieved the Advanced level, (Gold) of the Investors in People standard comfortably and were it to be assessed against the High Performing level (Platinum), it is believed that several of the themes at this level would have been met. The following recommendations for the Senior Leadership Team are based on the professional judgement and assessment of Five Acre Wood School undertaken by Corinne Wells. These recommendations are made in order to help Five Acre Wood progress on its IIP journey and achieve further improvement and will be discussed further at the feedback session.

- Consider re-communicating the values and behaviours on a regular basis so they become fully embedded throughout the school and understood by all. Considerable care is taken at recruitment and induction to communicate the desired values and behaviours, however ongoing reinforcement would help to ensure they are fully embedded.
- The School Development Plans are comprehensive and well written. Consider how the key priorities reflected in the plans can be captured simply, clearly and communicated to all staff so individual objectives can be more easily fully aligned with the school's key strategic targets. It is clear senior staff have a sound understanding of the strategic direction of the school. It would be helpful for all staff to have an appropriate understanding for their position and role, of these strategic objectives.
- Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure senior and middle staff take ownership for setting their own stretching objectives. Consider how this can be replicated consistently at more junior levels within the school.
- Feedback down the line appears to be working well on both a formal and informal basis. Consider how this can be extended to include peer to peer feedback. It is understood that the idea of a peer recognition scheme (which has been suggested already by staff) is in the process of being implemented and this should be very helpful to further support the drive to recognise all staff for discretionary effort and demonstration of the school's values and behaviours.
- Five Acre Wood offers an array of benefits. These were not generally readily identified by staff and therefore the impact may be diluted. Consider capturing the various benefits (financial and non-financial) and publicise fairly regularly. Many organisations find that producing a total reward statement periodically to be an effective way of highlighting the various benefits available.
- Consider how the positive impact Five Acre Wood School has on the wider community can be captured and communicated. The school has excellent internal communication processes, consider how communication externally can be maximised to best effect.
- Staff at various levels are actively encouraged to engage with and learn from other schools which has proved to be excellent learning for individuals and for Five Acre Wood. Consider similar engagement with non-teaching private sector organisations to widen experience and learning.

The key dates for the next stages of Five Acre Wood School's IIP journey are set out below:

Accreditation date	12-Month Review	24-Month Review	Accreditation Expiry
08/02/2019	08/02/2020	08/02/2021	08/02/2022

## Annex 1: Assessment outcome table

Final outcome against 27 themes Note: Lowest theme level dictates final indicator outcome		Developed	Established	Advanced
1. Leading and inspiring people	Creating transparency and trust			
	Motivating people to deliver the organisation's objectives			
	Developing leadership capability			
2. Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Operating in line with the values			
	Adopting the values			
	Living the values			
3. Empowering and involving people	Empowering people			
	Participating and collaborating			
	Making decisions			
4. Managing performance	Setting objectives			
	Encouraging high performance			
	Measuring and assessing performance			
5. Recognising and rewarding high performance	Designing an approach to recognition and reward			
	Adopting a culture of recognition			
	Recognising and rewarding people			
6. Structuring work	Designing roles			
	Creating autonomy in roles			
	Enabling collaborative working			
7. Building capability	Understanding people's potential			
	Supporting learning and development			
	Deploying the right people at the right time			
8. Delivering continuous improvement	Improving through internal and external sources			
	Creating a culture of continuous improvements			
	Encouraging innovation			
9. Creating sustainable success	Focusing on the future			
	Embracing change			
	Understanding the external context			

This table shows that Five Acre Wood school meets all indicators at Advanced level

## Appendix 2: Other Survey Data

Data showing industry average score (Secondary education general and vocational)

### Indicator summary

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score	Industry
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	37.8%	40.7%	12.8%	2.3%	2.4%	1.5%	2.6%	5.9	+0.2
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	49.3%	36.3%	6.3%	4.8%	1.0%	0.9%	1.4%	6.2	+0.2
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	40.2%	38.3%	13.5%	2.5%	1.8%	1.2%	2.5%	6	+0.2
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	48.0%	37.1%	6.3%	4.1%	1.7%	0.9%	1.9%	6.2	+0.3
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	22.2%	32.7%	22.7%	9.3%	3.2%	4.8%	5.2%	5.3	+0.2
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	50.0%	34.7%	9.7%	2.4%	1.1%	0.5%	1.6%	6.2	+0.2
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	35.9%	41.6%	12.1%	5.8%	1.2%	1.5%	1.8%	5.9	+0.4
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	37.3%	40.4%	12.2%	6.3%	0.9%	1.4%	1.5%	6	+0.2
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	47.6%	36.8%	8.9%	4.1%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%	6.2	+0.3

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