

case study



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Swiss Cottage School



- **Rated “outstanding” in all aspects at Ofsted inspections and now in Ofsted’s Hall of Fame**
- **Reduced staff turnover and absence**
- **Overflow of candidates when vacancies arise**

Background

Size:	80 people
Sector:	Education and Training
Location:	London
Status:	First recognised in 1999; achieved Investors in People Champion status in 2004

The organisation

Swiss Cottage School is a specialist special school for children with complex needs. The age of pupils ranges from 2 to 16 and the school currently educates around 145 children drawn from the North London area. The school opened in 1995 when two special schools were merged.

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Kay Bedford, Headteacher



The challenge

The schools which amalgamated to form Swiss Cottage School did not have a tradition of training and development for all staff, so there was a need to bring together people and processes in a management framework in which development for all was fundamental, relationships worked effectively and pupils and other stakeholders derived maximum benefit.

The School chose the Investors in People Standard for its potential to bring together management and people development to achieve its aims. School staff worked together to draw up the school's mission. This shows their commitment to provide a positive culture, and quality education, in which pupils develop self-confidence, strategies and skills for successful learning and the ability to use them in all aspects of life.

The School was first recognised as an Investor in People in 1999. When Profile was first launched, it opted for a Profile review, at the same time, the school also achieved the Investors in People Leadership & Management Model. Since then the school has had another outstanding re-recognition report.

The strategy

Investors in People helped the school to focus on the right things and it lives and breathes the Standard. IIP has helped to balance the day-to-day pressures against the strategic ones. Time is made for effective communications. It has involved every member of staff, whose opinions are actively sought, whose experience is shared, whose continuous professional development is kept at the forefront and whose performance is positively managed and supported. All staff have their own performance development plan. The school has high expectations and sets no horizons - for pupils and staff alike the only limit is the degree of belief in oneself. The best use is

made of people, time and finance to maximise outputs - the learning opportunities for pupils.

The results

Swiss Cottage School was a Beacon School for five years and, in September 2006, became a Specialist School for Special Educational Needs. Under this scheme it shares its expertise with six 'partner' schools and six community organisations. All three Ofsted inspections have rated the school as "outstanding" in all aspects of its work, one of only a handful of schools in the country to have achieved this. It is now in Ofsted's "Hall of Fame". The School manages pupil behaviour problems effectively. It has won numerous curriculum awards in areas as diverse as ICT, sports and the arts. Its culture and reputation have led to reduced staff turnover and absence, with no shortage of applicants on the rare occasions when vacancies arise. Employees have opportunities to develop within the school, using, amongst other things, the coaching and mentoring structures in place. There are examples of the school's teaching assistants going on to become qualified teachers.

Champion status

Swiss Cottage School is proud to have added Investors in People Champion status to its impressive list of achievements. As a Specialist School, it is already committed to a programme of consultancy and sharing best practice with other schools in its sector. The Headteacher works on the London Challenge, supporting two secondary schools to improve their practice, and is a lead facilitator on the Mentoring-Coaching course at the London Centre for Leadership in Learning at the Institute of Education. The School is always willing to learn more and provide more development opportunities for its people. Hence, best practice sharing is firmly in its culture.

