

What are the different flexible working practices in your workplace?

Co-Headship

Name: Paula Ayliffe and Sarah Stepney

Organisation Name: Mayfield Primary School

Organisation type: **Primary Maintained School**

Location: Cambridge

Email: head@mayfield.cambs.sch.uk

Telephone: 01223 712127

Summary of practice

We start each morning by triaging emails and allocating jobs. We use a shared email account, trusting each other to make appropriate decisions at the times when they need to be made. We thought we'd carefully divvy up the different aspects of the job; Sarah working with the curriculum and learning environments, and Paula leading the process of appraisal and CPD. In the main, however, it tends to be that whoever answers the phone or gets to an email first will then see the relevant task through to the end.

We have had many positive comments; recently a member of staff commented, “You know it’s good having two heads, there is always someone to talk to who can make a decision.”

Benefits of flexible working practice

Individual: Sarah and I had worked together, with our then Head, Jas, for three years as the SLT. We knew Jas was retiring and over coffee one morning Sarah jokingly said to me that we should do the job together – and instantly we both said out loud: ‘yes we should’.

Organisation: The advertisement went live and we asked the governors whether they might consider a joint application. They decided they would like single applications but would allow a joint presentation if we both successfully made it through to the final stages. We did, and they offered us the job! Contracts were drawn up which were unique – we were each to be half head and half deputy, meaning that we are both full time in school.

Pupils: A recent conversation with a year 4 pupil was recorded: “They show me that they believe in me, actually it’s not only me, it’s everyone in school. They help everyone, they invent new things and ways to help us. They help make the school a better place so everyone can learn properly.”

Further details available: <https://www.wholeeducation.org/how-co-headship-is-driving-change-at-mayfield-primary-school/>

