

Investigating research-engaged schools: the story so far

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What do a kaleidoscope, a football crowd, a jar of sweets and the solar system have in common? The answer is that these are all metaphors for a 'research-engaged school' suggested by teachers attending a recent seminar. Interestingly, the metaphors, although diverse, touched on common themes of excitement, experimentation, exploration and growth.

The NFER is leading on an important research and development project, which will have far-reaching implications for teachers' involvement in research. The project involves partnership working with 15 schools and three LEAs. It is cofunded by the NFER, the LGA, the NCSL, the GTCE and the partner LEAs. It is aiming to focus on the process and implications of research engagement as a

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means of school improvement. A recent project seminar, which took place at the National College for School Leadership in Nottingham, involved over 40 teachers, local education authority advisers and sponsor representatives. It was judged a considerable success. One teacher said:

It was all enjoyable – gaining ideas from other colleagues and knowing our ideas and goals are similar. You have been inspirational in promoting research and how valuable it is in schools.

The project is now entering a challenging stage, where teachers have to write up their research activities and reflect on their experiences of becoming 'research-engaged'. The project will be completed by the summer of 2005, and the NFER is planning a conference in September to share our experiences of the processes and outcomes of research engagement.



Further details of the conference will be posted on our website (www.nfer.ac.uk) nearer the time. For more information about the research, contact Caroline Sharp on 01753 637321 or c.sharp@nfer.ac.uk or Dawn Sanders on 01753 637214 or d.sanders@nfer.ac.uk.