**Dalkeith High School Learning Visits: October 2016**

**Introduction**

In session 2016-17, it was agreed that the focus of the Learning Visits involving all teachers would be on the **visible learner** strand of **Visible Learning**. This reflects our continuing development of learning and teaching strategies in keeping with the **Visible Learning** model. As part of their continuous in-service training, all staff were introduced to the four **Learner Qualities** we would be embedding at Dalkeith High School. It was agreed that we would focus on developing learners who are:

* **Responsible**
* **Resourceful**
* **Resilient**
* **Reflective**

Therefore, the Learning Visits undertaken considered the ways in which promotion of these **learner qualities** was being embedded in classroom practice.

Staff had three weeks in which to complete their visits and were encouraged to find their own visit partners/ trios in an effort to enable open, peer to peer dialogue. Most pairs/trios were from different subjects/ faculties to extend their understanding of learning and teaching across the whole school.

**Composition of Learning Visits**

60 Learning Visits were evidenced. The subjects represented were: Administration, Art and Design, ASDAN, Beauty Skills, Biology, Business Education, CDT, Computing Science, Drama, English, Forest Schools, French, Geography, Graphic Communication, History, Home Economics, Hospitality, Numeracy, Maths, Modern Studies, Music, PE, Physics, Practical Cake Craft, PSE, RME, Science, Spanish, and Support for Learning.

40 of the visits were to classes in the Broad General Education (BGE), with 19 to classes in the Senior Phase. In addition, the visit to Support for Learning involved pupils from a range of year groups. As well as visits to traditional classroom environments, visitors were also able to see some of the work undertaken by learners accessing the Enhanced Curriculum, and by those involved in the new vocational qualifications in the Senior Phase.

As part of our continuing commitment to working with parents and carers, two members of the Parent Council also made visits alongside a member of SLT, and were able to offer their own perspectives on current practice in learning and teaching.

**Gathering Evidence**

All staff taking part in Learning Visits were supplied with the same Learning Visit Reflection pro-forma *(see Appendix A.)* The pro-forma used to record learning Visits in 2015-16 was redesigned to reflect the changes to Quality Indicators in *How Good Is Our School? (4)* The Learning Visit Reflection Form alsohighlighted the focus on the **visible learner** via the four **Learner Qualities**.

All visitors structured their comments with reference to the **HGIOS Quality Indicators** below:

* Learning, teaching and assessment: quality of teaching; effective use of assessment (2.3)
* Curriculum: skills for learning, life and work (2.2)
* Personalised support: targeted support; removal of barriers to learning (2.4)

Further to this, they were encouraged to make a note of:

* Key discussion points following the lesson
* Aims for future visits (staff will work in the same pairs/trios in May 2016)
* Good practice observed that could be shared more widely

**Key observations: Learning, teaching and assessment (2.3)**

It was clear from the evidence provided that staff had very much engaged with the concept of Learner Qualities. Almost all of the Reflection Forms made explicit reference to learners being responsible, resourceful, resilient and reflective. Such was the volume of reflective comments it is not possible to include them all in full. However, the observations below provide examples of highly effective learning and teaching in the full range of subject contexts.

**Art and Design:** Learners were encouraged to be resourceful by accessing different materials in the room; one to one questioning was used to focus on learners’ thought processes; learners were reflecting on their own work using a checklist of standards.

**Administration:** The learners compared their response to exam specimen questions to highlight areas of partial rather than full understanding; the learners took time to share their ideas with each other.

**ASDAN:** The assessments used emphasised the learner qualities e.g. pupils being responsible for learning check at the end.

**Biology:** Resources were differentiated to meet the needs of all learners; the four Rs were referenced throughout and learners understood how they applied to the lesson; learners demonstrated an ability to analyse the work and justify their opinions

**Beauty Skills:** Demonstrations were given and the learners could then practise what had been demonstrated on each other.

**Business Management:** The use of an appropriately challenging starter engaged and settled the class.

**CDT:** Pupils had a demonstration and a diagram to follow on the board meaning they were responsible for their own learning; learners had clear targets which helped them to be resilient.

**Computing Science:** A challenge task was used to differentiate the work for learners making good progress; there were opportunities for pupils to ask questions to clarify and develop thinking.

**Drama:** There was good use of tone and volume to help keep the class on task; the clear instructions given meant everyone could get on task quickly.

**English:** The learners understood how the lesson linked to previous learning and there were clear success criteria; there was a clear focus on progression; interesting questioning techniques engaged higher order thinking skills.

**Forest Schools:** Learners were encouraged to take ownership of the camp; learners worked as a team to ensure success; learners were able to assess each other and give peer to peer feedback.

**French:** Learners were resourceful in their use of the dictionary to help them; learners reflected on their previous learning during the recap.

**Graphic Communication:** Learners were resourceful in identifying ways in which we use graphics; learners reflected with the teacher to identify their best drawing.

**History:** Learners were given time to engage with individual feedback to improve performance; learning intentions were displayed and frequently returned to; open questions were used to gauge understanding.

**Home Economics:** Learners were encouraged to refer to the recipe and other visible information rather than asking the teacher immediately; the lesson was learner lead and there was good peer support.

**Hospitality:** Learners were trusted to be responsible in collecting their resources; learners had to be resilient to undertake the lesson task independently; learners reflected on their own work and that of others towards the end.

**Maths:** Learners were clearly used to using evaluation sheets; learners reflected on the topics they wanted to revise and were responsible for identifying these; learners used ‘show me’ boards to self assess their responses; peer marking was used to create reflective dialogue about learning.

**Modern Studies:** Learners’ understanding was regularly checked through both individual and whole class questions.

**Numeracy:** Learners had the chance to review work already covered as preparation for assessment.

**Music:** Questioning was used to establish prior knowledge to build on; there was the constant development of new skills as both a class and as individuals.

**PE:** During reflection, the teacher set challenges for learners to build on their skills and fitness; the captains in each team took extra responsibility for organising and discussing tasks; the learners were very resourceful in creating their own practices/ games/ rules.

**Practical Cake Craft:** There were high expectations of the learners and they were able to do things for themselves.

**PSE:** There was good use of questioning to challenge the learners and allow them to reflect; the learners were given clear roles to take on in their group task.

**Physics:** Learners were encouraged to use the resources provided before asking for help; constructive feedback was given by the teacher during reflective conversations.

**RME:** Learners had the chance to feedback to their peers on positives and ways of improving; feedback forms were used as records of learning.

**Science:** There was effective use of plenary to assess learning; class discussion was encouraged; a summary support sheet given out to help preparer learners for summative assessment; learners had time to reflect on and remediate work from their last assessment

**Spanish:** Explanations were given in a clear and concise manner; good questioning techniques were used throughout to check forward planning

**Support for Learning**: Records of work were in place to chart pupil progress.

**Key observations: Skills for learning, life and work (2.2)**

The development of skills was a key focus for staff in session 2014-15. Therefore, it was encouraging to see the extent to which these remained embedded within learning experiences at Dalkeith High School. Further to this, there were many explicit references to the Learner Qualities being promoted this session. Such was the volume of reflective comments it is not possible to include them all in full. However, the observations below provide examples of the ways in which skills for learning, life and work remain evident across the full range of subject areas.

**Art and Design:** Using a word bank helped to build learners’ resilience in developing evaluation skills; the work being completed was contextualised with reference to the real life application of the skills being developed; the learners were encouraged to be resilient and have a growth mindset.

**ASDAN:** The use of pictures as a resource to stimulate learning encouraged learners to interpret what they meant.

**Beauty Skills:** Learners showed resilience in continuing until they had achieved the desired result; learners were responsible for their ‘client’; learners were reflective in being given and being asked for feedback.

**Business Management:** The teacher made use of real life examples; learners were selected to represent different real life roles.

**CDT:** Pupil worked safely and had to tidy up independently; the teacher made explicit reference to ‘applying’ as the skills focus for the lesson.

**Drama:** The activities encouraged communication skills and teamwork and the lesson allowed for all of the 4R qualities to be exemplified..

**Computing Science:** Learners are made aware of viruses and other issues which can cause problems with technology.

**English:** Learners were encouraged to think independently; learners expanding their thinking skills by understanding and analysing the poem; word stems were linked to other areas of the curriculum; the learners focused on identifying the purpose of pieces of writing

**Forest Schools:** The learners had to be resourceful and resilient in a challenging outdoor environment; some learners were deemed responsible enough to begin to develop knife skills and techniques, respecting the safety implications involved.

**Graphic Communication:** One learner encouraged resilience in another who said he couldn’t draw by reminding him he should have a growth mindset; learners were encouraged to take personal responsibility for the quality of their drawings.

**French:** Learners used a variety of resources to gather information for their task; learners used peer assessment; learners could transfer vocabulary they had learnt to a new context; learners were encouraged to be responsible by offering their own contributions.

**Geography:** Learners were encouraged to be responsible through using cooperative learning; learners discussed interview skills.

**Home Economics:** Learners learnt about relevant health and safety issues; numeracy was developed through timekeeping, counting, measuring and weighing; learners communicated confidently about ways in which they used what they had learned at home.

**Hospitality:** Cooking a healthy meal from scratch safely was clearly a skill for life; learners also had to manage strict deadlines to make the meal

**History:** Learners set their own SMART targets which were relevant and meaningful; resilience was developed through encouraging learners to justify their answers; confidence was developed through encouraged the sharing of responses with the whole class

**Maths:** When learners reflected on their test they were able to come up with the next steps for development; pupils collaborated with each other to review their assessment; real world examples were used to give the learning relevance; learners were able to express their views as to how learning could be improved for them.

**Modern Studies:** Learners demonstrated a clear understanding of referenda and their importance.

**Music:** There was very tight focus on the skills needed for success in listening; resilience was important as learners persevered with their instrumental skills.

**Numeracy:** It was easy for learners to make the link between the learning and real life contexts.

**Physics:** Learners considered any mistakes made in their assessment and worked hard to find the right answer, encouraging resilience

**PE:** Learners were encouraged to reflect on their performance and come up with their next steps; learners showed resilience by persevering in order to beat last week’s score; learners considered stamina, energy levels, and factoring in rests; communication skills were encouraged.

**Practical Cake Craft:** As well as the obvious job link here, learners also practised transferable skills including timekeeping, measuring, and reading for information.

**PSE:** Learners completed a specific activity at the start based on the 4 Rs; learners were encouraged to listen to others and their points of view.

**RME:** It was made clear that learners were responsible for providing sensible, interesting feedback on the religion they were investigating; the class teacher and learners worked together to assess the groups’ presentations

**Science:** Resilience and resourcefulness were encouraged through the use of troubleshooting tips on the board; learners knew that it’s okay to make mistakes; learners show resourcefulness in planning how to achieve the targets they have set for themselves

**Spanish:** Linking the writing to the work experience that learners were about to complete made the content highly relevant

**Support for Learning:** Learners were working with a degree of independence through unit awards that they would otherwise have missed out on.

**Key observations: Personalised Support (2.4)**

In this area, there were comments on targeted supports for individuals as well as effective whole class strategies for ensuring access to the curriculum for all. The range of strategies identified below demonstrates a clear development in comparison to observations in 2015-16, as learners across the full range ofl abilities continue to be supported to make the best possible progress.

* The learners were able to refer to examples from another class to help **visualise** what they were aiming for
* The learning assistant offered effective additional support and **encouraged learners to be resilient**
* **Staff were fully participating in the lesson** as a part of the group which encouraged the excellent relationship between learners and the teacher
* Learners were fully aware of **different strategies** they could use to succeed in what they perceived to be a ‘hard’ subject
* Learners were encouraged to focus on **dealing with problem areas** in their assessment rather than taking the view that they couldn’t manage anything
* **Verbal and written instructions were combined** to ensure learners were confident in what to do
* The class teacher circulated to **support those who might be reluctant** to put up their hands to ask for help
* Learners were permitted to **choose audio rather than video recording** if they felt self-conscious about completing the task
* **Demonstrations** were used to enable learners to see all of the steps they would be undertaking
* There is a clear **link between the theory and practical** tasks in lessons
* Tasks were **differentiated** for learners working at Nat 4/5 so that everyone could access the activity
* One learner who was anxious about contributing to the group discussion tasks was asked questions individually to ensure **he could still demonstrate his understanding**
* Learners working in the support base understood that it gave them an **extra opportunity** to access relevant learning
* The focus on working as an **inclusive team** encouraged learners to be resilient
* **Materials were provided** so that those who did not have what they needed could still access the learning
* The lesson was broken into ‘chunks’ so that learners could access the tasks **step by step**
* The use of **mixed ability groups** allowed for peer support
* A **range of resources** was provided to ensure different learning needs were catered for
* Each stage was **clearly linked** with the next so that learners could see their progress
* If learners were finding tasks difficult, **alternative methods** were suggested to help them succeed
* **Sample phrases** were shared with learners to support those for whom the exercise proved challenging
* **A ‘template’** was given before the written task began to help structure responses
* Learners were encouraged to make use of **ICT to support** them in their task
* The importance of **growth mindsets** was emphasised with learners focusing on being able to improve
* The **collaborative** nature of the tasks ensured that learners could work cooperatively to raise attainment for all
* The use **of images prior to text** meant that all learners could immediately engage; literacy skills were then promoted later in the lesson
* The teacher clearly supported learners who were finding reflective tasks a challenging, by reminding them of the **learning targets** they had set
* Learners were **paired** to give each other support and share ideas
* The teacher provided a **whiteboard with simplified versions of the questions** set to help the learner to access these and demonstrate understanding
* The **level of support was differentiated** to allow those who were confident to continue with the next stage
* There were **extra checks** in place to ensure the learner with English as an additional language could access all of the lesson content
* The use of ‘**show me’ boards** meant all learners could offer an answer without worrying about getting it wrong
* Jotter work was **checked throughout the lesson** so that the teacher could immediately identify possible problems or doubts the learners were having
* Learners were able to **set their own level of difficulty** according to how confident they felt
* An example of **completed work and a laminated guide** were provided
* An **assessment grid** was used to make the success criteria easy to understand
* Lollipop stick were used with names to choose who was answering, so learners could see that everyone was being **treated fairly** and were encouraged to focus
* The **quality learning conversations** taking place meant the teacher could identify everyone’s particular needs
* Protocols, resources and targeted support were robust enough to enable **multiple entry points** to the task
* **Prompts and questioning** were used to support a learner in need of extra help
* **Think/pair/share** was used when putting definitions into the learners’ own words

**Key discussion points between teacher/ visitor**

There continues to be evidence of increasing **reflective professional dialogue** having taken place after Learning Visits. Some of the discussions were specific to the context of the lesson, but the points below relate to wider aspects of Learning and Teaching:

* Where all **relevant resources** are in place and the tasks fit the allocated time, the smooth running of the lesson is apparent
* The **positive way in which teachers and pupils interact** is hugely important
* Learners **evaluating their learning** gives them the confidence to set their own targets
* Learners enjoy working together and **sharing knowledge**
* It’s good to make young people aware of the **impact that their behavior can have** on their learning
* **Starters** can be used to **inform a later part of the lesson** rather than simply as a re-cap
* Learner qualities were in evidence throughout the lesson but may need to be **signposted more explicitly** for some learners
* The process of completing Learning Visits highlights the importance of being **consistent** across departments in terms of promoting Learner Qualities
* The use of resources clearly available at key points in the room meant that the learners could **access support for themselves**
* The Learning Visits help to promote the **transference of skills and ideas** from one subject to another, supporting continuity in the learning journey
* Using **examples of work** on display in classes provides support and encouragement to learners
* When learners are aware of their **learning objectives** it help to keep them focused and on task
* **Peer assessment** can be used to stimulate discussion, though there’s still a place for marking by the teacher
* Using **online** questions, videos etc can be used as well as paper based resources to increase learners’ comprehension
* A focus on **exam skills** demonstrates the types of challenges learners will face and showed that everyone could learn about **techniques** to master these
* **Teacher movement** around the class ensures everyone is give feedback, praise and challenge
* The learners did **peer assessment** at the same time as the teacher assessed, which gave them a good understanding of the standards
* Resilience is promoted when we encourage learners to look at **mistakes** made in previous lessons to prevent them making the same
* The **teacher identified** when the learners were exhibiting the learner qualities throughout the lesson
* Learners had a chance **to reflect** when they had to give new definitions for familiar words, helping them to reformulate what they have learned
* Issuing **time limits and reminders** encourages pupils to be responsible and self-manage
* **Encouragement** throughout the lesson helps pupils to keep on task
* The **management skills** used in a group work lessons are important to keep everyone involved
* Clearly **differentiated resources** ensured that all pupils were given the opportunity to complete their work in an efficient and effective manner
* The good use of **problem solving in context** provides learners with the opportunity to become more resourceful
* The **supportive and positive atmosphere** immediately allowed pupils to feel confident
* The teacher was implementing a range of **visible learning strategies** learnt in the previous year and it was agreed that the learners really could see their **progress**
* Pupils really liked that the **learning intentions** were written down so they could see what was going on clearly

**Outcomes/aims**

A number of these were specific to classroom context. It was clear that participant in the Learning Visits understood the dispositions associated with the visible learner and were keen to continue to develop the Learner Qualities. Outcomes/ aims included:

* Using a **range of assessment techniques** to assess and record pupils’ work and progression
* Allow more **independence and discussion** so the pupils are leading the lesson
* Use **success criteria** to support pupils in doing **self and peer assessment** of complete work
* Consider how to **signpost the Learner Qualities** more in class
* **Evaluate the impact** of using ‘the four Rs’ in class
* Focus on **reflection**
* **Evaluate the introduction of the record sheets** being produced
* **Sharing examples** across the different faculties to see how reflection is promoted in the BGE
* Make clear **links between the skills learned in class and their use in real life**
* Look at ways to **target resilience** and emphasise its importance to learners
* Promote **responsibility** and encourage pupils to use their own initiative
* Ensure pupils **revisit their own learning targets** and intended activities to achieve them, using this to inform **next steps**
* Increase **pace and challenge** in the run up to exams
* Develop more **active learning** strategies
* Think about how to **build self belief** in the learners
* Create a poster or wall **display of the course content**
* Find the balance between pushing pupils harder **to work out of their comfort zone** and the danger of failure and disengagement
* Visit a class where National Qualifications are being undertaken to see how the **theory** content there is delivered **practicall**y
* Keep developing strategies to make sure lessons are **pupil led rather than teacher led**

**Notes of good practice**

The features identified below have been highlighted as they provide very specific examples of effective learning and teaching that could transfer effectively to other contexts.

* It’s clear that the pupils really enjoy the **peer learning** that comes from working in their groups
* **Restorative conversations** with pupils were held to deal with a any discipline issues
* The class was **learning through discussion** and working practically rather than just being fed information
* Effective use of **time management** meant that the lesson was split into ‘chunks’ and the learners always knew what they were doing
* The teacher was clearly using **visible learning strategies** as all the pupils were familiar with the language and knew about having a **‘growth mindset’** when learning
* The use of a ‘Learner Conversations: Learner Target Setting’ sheet encouraged a more focused and **individualised approach to target setting**
* **Modelling** the techniques being used made the conceptual ideas very clear
* **The class was almost running itself**, with everyone listening, doing presentations, or recording parts
* The use of **humour** created a good learning environment
* The use of **key words to focus note taking** without resorting to just copying
* Using an **online stopwatch** to focus tasks
* Pupils tidied up the area as part of their **established routine**

**Next steps**

Information from the Learning Visits will be used as a basis for staff professional development through reflection at departmental and/or faculty meetings. They will try to answer the following questions:

* What are our strengths in developing the Learner Qualities? (Including evidence of these)
* Where are our development needs? (Good practice form other department can be used here)
* How will we address these ahead of the second round of Learning Visits in May 2017?

The Visible Learning Working Group will also evaluate the process of Learning Visits and share their findings with the school community.

Appendix A

**D A L K E I T H H I G H S C H O O L**

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**Learning Visit Reflection**

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| **Class/Group:** | **Teacher:** | **Date:****24/05/16** |
| **Level(s):** | **Support staff:** |  |
| **Curricular area/subject:** | **Visitor/Chair:** |
| **Whole school focus: *The promotion of Learner Qualities (Responsible, Resourceful, Resilient, Reflective)*** |
| **Brief description of activities:**  |

* **Quality of teaching**
* **Effective use of assessment**

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| **Comments:*****Quality Indicator 2.3: Learning, Teaching and Assessment*** |

* **Skills for learning, life and work**

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| **Comments:*****Quality Indicator 2.2: Curriculum*** |

* **Targeted support**
* **Removal of potential barriers to learning**

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| **Comments:*****Quality Indicator 2.4: Personalised Support*** |

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| **Key discussion points between teacher/ visitor: (Please ensure that these discussions take place as soon as possible after the Learning Visit.)** |
| **Outcome/aim for future learning visits:** |

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| **Note of good practice if applicable (to be shared)** |

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| **Next Learning Visit: May 2017** |