

Dalkeith High School Learning Visits: October 2017

Introduction

In session 2017-18 DHS has been continuing with its work on Visible Learning. In particular, the focus for the session is **know thy impact** and progress will be demonstrated through increased use of data to plan targeted interventions, and the establishment of practitioner enquiry as part of the day to day work of the school. Given that this strand is not necessarily easily observable in a single period visit, there has been an opportunity to provide an alternative focus for Learning Visits.

Following on from the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) undertaken in May 2017, it was agreed that a key focus for development in learning, teaching and assessment would be embedding **collaborative learning**.

Professional learning prior to the Learning Visits was available through the following resources:

- Summary paper on effective collaborative practice
- Guide to practical collaborative strategies
- Staff workshop to share and reflect on current practice in this area

For the first time, staff were set in their pairs/ trios. This was in accordance with the Learning and Teaching Self Assessment (see *Appendix A*) that 87% of staff completed in September. Pairs/trios were created to reflect the strengths and area for development staff identified themselves. This meant that, in addition to the whole school focus on collaborative learning, there was also the opportunity for staff to share practice in their particular area of interest and/ or expertise.

Throughout the paper, observations that link directly and explicitly to collaborative learning have been italicized.

Composition of Learning Visits

59 Learning Visits were evidenced. The subjects represented were: Art and Design, ASDAN, Beauty, Biology, Business Education, Classics, Craft and Design Technology, Drama, English, Computing Science, Forest Schools, Geography, History, Home Economics, Human Biology, Maths, Modern Studies, Music, Personal and Social Education Physical Education, Refereeing, Religious and Moral Education, Science, Spanish, Support for Learning.

Approximately two thirds of the visits took place within BGE classes, with the remaining third in the Senior Phase.

Gathering Evidence

All teachers taking part in Learning Visits were supplied with the same Learning Visit Reflection pro-forma (see *Appendix B*), which reflects some of the Quality Indicators in *How Good Is Our School? (4)* The Learning Visit Reflection Form also highlighted the focus on collaborative learning.

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 specific lesson
- Good practice linked either to the lesson or to the area of practice identified by the Learning and Teaching Self Assessment
- An aim for the next Learning Visit.

Key observations: Learning, teaching and assessment (2.3)

The learning visits clearly evidenced a variety of learning, teaching and assessment approaches. There was a very mixed picture with regards to the use of collaborative approaches, with only a little over half of the lessons offering clear collaborative opportunities. However, it is acknowledged that there is a wide range of professional experience in this area, and some practitioners may only be beginning to explore effective collaborative work. Consequently, it might be expected that this will move towards engagement with and/or the embedding of collaborative structures across all subject areas as the academic year progresses.

The comments below highlight some of the good practice evidenced across the range of subject areas. Italics are used where explicit references to effective collaborative learning have been made.

Art and Design: *Social goals* as well as learning goals were specifically identified; the comments made in the peer assessment activity were thoughtful, appropriate and attainable; the pupils could work well collaboratively due to previous experience and training.

ASDAN: High quality question and answer took place with pupils; the learning intentions were very clear.

Beauty: The pupils were clearly interested in their practical tasks; there was a positive classroom environment.

Biology: The pupils completed 'exit questions' at the end of the lesson as part of the plenary; pupils were allowed to *share their answers* before writing them down; learners *worked collaboratively in pairs to share ideas* before offering them to the class as a whole; the true/false statement activity involved the whole class.

Business Education: Clear expectations were set for the class including learning intentions and success criteria; peer assessment took place at the end of the task.

CDT: Activities were clearly modeled before *learners broke away to work on tasks in groups*; learning intentions and success criteria were clearly shared with the class; the lesson began with a clear summary of previous learning and its link to the lesson.

Classics: IT was used very effectively to give feedback on homework to pupils; there was a clear focus for the lesson with specific reference to both learning intentions and success criteria.

Computing Science: All activities were timed which kept the learners on task; there were clear instructions with success criteria.

Drama: Peer assessment was a key part of the lesson, with pupils offering praise and constructive criticism on the performances of others.

English: Questioning was used to gauge understanding throughout; learning intentions and success criteria were discussed at the start, reviewed throughout and referred to as an assessment tool at the

end; *think time* enabled the learners to collaborate and the teacher to assess their understanding; the importance of *individual contributions to a group goal* was discussed.

Forest Schools: Learners *worked collaboratively to develop problem solving* strategies; the *community spirit* in the group was evident as learners supported each other and offered solution to challenges.

French: The whole class was involved in the question and answer session; stimulating visuals were used to engage learners.

Geography: Learners *peer assessed in groups* after a short test to check understanding; Learning intentions and success criteria were very clear; pupils had clear responsibility for one part of the activity each, then *peer assessed before putting their response together*.

History: Learners were assessed via discussions well as the teacher walking round to assess responses; stimulating visuals were used to engage learners.

Home Economics: At the end of the lesson, learners were able to evaluate their work using a success criteria checklist.

Human Biology: Everyone understood their role within the task; there were timed sections to ensure the pace of learning.

Maths: A *mixture of individual and paired work* and the 'mix and match' task kept learning varied and interesting; the use of show me boards helped to check understanding throughout the lesson; *the group work task was clearly linked to the class rewards system*; activities were timed and feedback was instant.

Modern Studies: Pupils were used to explain the task and clarify details; there was a clear recap on the lesson and the pupils knew they were aiming at a presentation at the end of the week.

Music: *The groups were set ahead of time* and absences/ changes dealt with swiftly; clear instructions helped the learners to keep on task and engage

Personal and Social Education: There were clear expectations set for the learners; peer support was used effectively throughout.

Physical Education: The teacher acted as facilitator with the pupils leading; the *learners worked collaboratively to identify development needs and ensure success*;

Referee course: Video was used to inspire class discussion; the starter task clearly linked to relevant terminology.

Religious and Moral Education: Verbal reinforcement was used with pupils repeating the task back to show their understanding; the learners has to take three different viewpoints into account which they *discovered through a collaborative task*.

Spanish: The lesson had clear literacy links and written feedback was used well.

Science: Learners completed exit questions as a plenary activity to indicate their understanding; *predetermined lab partners* were in place and the pairs constructed series circuits

Support for Learning: There was an atmosphere of calm and purposeful activity; a wide range of appropriate resources was available; *mixed age and stage groups facilitated social and cognitive interaction* and exchange.

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

Staff knowledge and understanding of skills has gradually developed over several sessions and there was evidence of a high level of confidence amongst staff as to how these are being developed across classrooms. However, it is also worth noting that a small number of staff did not seem clear in what skills they should be looking for and commenting on. Therefore, it may be beneficial to revisit these as part of ongoing professional learning at departmental level. Staff will be further supported in this area through the focus on Employability Skills due to be delivered in March 2018.

The comments below highlight some of the good practice evidenced across the range of subject areas. Italics are used where explicit references to effective collaborative learning have been made.

Art and Design: Learners had the chance to lead the learning by presenting their ideas to the class; *building the skills in collaboration* is relevant to many areas of employment; learners were able to reflect and align their own next steps to feedback from the teacher.

ASDAN: There were clear roles within the teams and *learners worked very effectively within the group*.

Beauty: Pupils were learning about skills relevant to the industry; all pupils were engaged and on task.

Biology: Learners understood how the lesson fitted with the N5 course as a whole; the learners understood ideas of the genome and inheritance.

Business Education: There was a clear understanding of terms links to cash budgets; the topic was related to the workplace and potential future jobs.

CDT: There were lots of opportunities for learners to communicate positively with each other through e.g trading with each other or asking for peer support; encouraging learners to think about the function, material, safety and aesthetics of different everyday objects gave the lesson clear relevance.

Classics: Pupils *working collaboratively were given the chance to take on a leadership role* in their group; they developed their interpersonal skills and soft skills such as time management.

Computing Science: The reading and writing requirement in the lesson were clearly linked to literacy; the issue of internet safety for young people was clearly relevant to real life; skills in the use of technology.

Drama: The supportive environment meant that everyone was able to offer and accept constructive criticism; *there were clear teamwork skills* in evidence

English: There were clear opportunities to develop literacy through reading, writing, and talking; social skills such as listening and waiting were being developed; listening, talking and presenting skills were used throughout the lesson; students were encouraged to take responsibility for their own progress and *work collaboratively towards success*.

Forest schools: Positive interaction between the pupils was promoted when the teacher took on a facilitating role; there were clear opportunities for the learners to practise their decision making skills.

French: There were clear references to numeracy and literacy throughout.

Geography: The use of the map of a local area clearly linked the lesson to everyday life.

History: There was a balance of activities to link to different skills e.g. *discussion, collaboration*; there were clear links to thinking skills such as remembering, understanding, applying and evaluating

Home Economics: There were clear links to numeracy through the use of weights and measures.

Human Biology: Communication, leadership and time management were evident; there was a planned presentation for the next lesson.

Maths: The real world examples were a good way of making the lesson relevant.

Modern Studies: There was a clear link to current events and topics; the pupils using literacy, *communication and problem solving within their group work* task.

Music: There was a strong focus problem solving skills; *the roles for the group work were defined with everyone given a clear responsibility.*

Physical Education: Learners were skilled in *providing feedback to each other*; verbal communication supported the process of sharing ideas and deciding on next steps; making decisions in a time restricted environment was highly relevant.

Personal and Social Education: There was a focus on revision skills applicable to any subject; interpersonal skills were used throughout.

Refereeing course: As well as being a clear skills for work course, there was also analysis.

Religious and Moral Education: *Collaborative learning was the main focus of the class*, with pupils reading information, condensing and reporting back to their peers.

Science: The lesson reflected the fact that a number of learners had identified a desire to improve their numeracy; learners were encouraged to use their booklet to check information and spelling rather than always being reliant on the teacher.

Spanish: The article and associated vocabulary were easy to relate to real life situations; there was a focus on conversational vocabulary.

Support for Learning: Tasks promoted interdependence and a focus on conflict resolution ensured modeling of positive interactions/ relationships; learners engaged in a reflection.

Key observations: Personalised Support (2.4)

As we move into the fourth session of Learning Visits at DHS, it is particularly gratifying to note the ever-increasing evidence of effective support strategies. In conjunction with Support for Learning teachers and learning assistants, classroom teachers deploy a full range of techniques to engage and motivate learners of all interests and abilities, as seen in the comments below:

*Denotes more than one similar response

- There was a clear focus on an **effective feedback loop** to ensure evaluative comments were of a high quality
- **Key words were highlighted** on the PowerPoint to support learners in making high quality notes
- The 'cut and stick **match up task**' supported differentiation as the learners had all the relevant info to hand and were encouraged to support each other

- All answers were valued with additional explanations from the teacher where required
- **Extension tasks** were ready for those who had completed the key activities (*)
- The **teacher and learning assistant worked very effectively together** to target support in a discrete manner (*)
- A **strategic seating plan** was evident to support both learning and behavioural needs
- The **PowerPoint offered a clear structure** that the learners could rely on as much or as little as was appropriate
- The **reward of points** allowed peers to encourage each other to work towards a common goal
- **Paired tasks** ensured that everyone was able to access the text (*)
- There was clear differentiation with **slightly different levels of text** to offer challenge as appropriate
- The **quick pace of the lesson** meant there were fewer opportunities for learners to become distracted or bored (*)
- It was explicitly stated that learners who required further input could **access Study Support**
- The **teacher's role as facilitator** ensured that learners were able to demonstrate responsibility at a level appropriate to them
- The **teacher's movement around the room** ensured that support and feedback could be given as part of the ongoing lesson, rather than as an add on after the event
- The **summary at the end of the lesson** gave the learners the chance to feedback to the teacher on their learning
- The use of **timed element** to the lesson helps to support appropriate pace and challenge
- Pupil responded very well to the **teacher's calm approach** and warm manner (*)
- There was clearly a **culture of evaluation** in the class and the learners were very responsive to feedback
- The use of **traffic light cards** enabled support as required
- Pupils were clearly **comfortable asking for help** with writing or other issues
- The **variety of tasks** for the group activity enable differentiation as learners were linked to a task at an appropriate level, but everyone contributed to the final presentation of ideas
- **Mixed ability groups** meant that, although the teacher was available for support, learners were encouraged to ask each other (*)
- The **learning assistant within the class was very responsive** to those who needed support (*)
- The choice of **writing or drawing responses** ensured everyone was included

Discussion points on the lesson

Staff were encouraged to take part in discussion of the lesson as soon as possible after the visit. Many of the comments recorded were made in reference to specific lessons topics and subjects. However, a selection of points with a wider relevance is below:

- How to **collaborate effectively** with peers requires further discussion, as some pupils dominated the conversation
- A **variety of questioning techniques** would ensure more whole class participation, rather than reliance on pupils putting their hands up
- Referring to the **learning intentions and success criteria** throughout the lesson would help the learners understand their progress
- The **teacher acting as a facilitator** gave the learners the confidence to problem solve for themselves

- **Formative feedback** throughout the lesson gave the learners something to aim for and helped them to continue to make progress
- **Over-reliance on copying from the board** has a significant impact on those with low literacy levels
- The **excellent pupil conduct linked directly to the approaches** used to deal with indiscipline and positive relationships in evidence
- The enthusiasm of the pupils could link to the **relevance of the skills for work course**
- **Group work was clearly well established** in the class and this led to pupils working very well together and solving problems collaboratively
- Staff need to think about how they can still use **collaborative learning strategies** whilst ensuring that all of the content for examinations is still covered
- **Careful planning** ahead of a lesson supports group activities as any issues that might arise have already been considered
- There were some **'missed' opportunities for collaborative learning** that would have further engaged the pupils
- Having a **range of different activities** helped to keep the pupils focused and engaged
- The pupils clearly had the **skills required for cooperative learning** and can now move towards genuinely collaborative activities
- Although there were **clear explanations of activities** there were no references to learning intentions or success criteria
- The **use of Kahoot** to recap on previous lesson engaged students within the first minutes
- The use of **positive praise** to build relationships was highly effective

Discussion points on areas of good practice:

As above, discussion points relevant across curricular areas are highlighted below:

*Denotes more than one similar response

- Interesting that the focus during evaluation was on the **learners giving the feedback** rather than the learner doing the activity being evaluated
- **WAGOLL**: 'What a good one looks like' was used as part of scaffolding to offer support and challenge
- The **pace of learning** helped to avoid issues with behaviour in a potentially challenging class
- The **very restorative approach** ensured that the relationships in the class were very positive (*)
- **Pre-determined partners** saved time in the lesson
- **Exit questions noted down** and placed in tub as part of plenary to give instant feedback
- Clear collaborative learning was in place with **set groups, roles and timers** part of the class routine
- The use of a picture rather than spoken/written information really helped the pupils to **visualize their learner journey** (*)
- Learners answering questions by **raising hands with eyes closed** helped to avoid any self consciousness or embarrassment
- The **learners' feedback** on what they perceived as weaknesses **informed the activities** in the lesson
- The **constant use of names, praise and careful questioning** helped to extract responses from quiet members of the class

- The use of **show me boards** removes the fear of making a mistake and encourages the pupils to work with their peers
- The **mix of activities** meant that the pupils had lots of opportunities to show their learning in different ways (*)
- The pupils used **traffic light cards** to indicate a need for support from the teacher
- PPT on Glow ensured that pupils had ownership of their presentations and the **learners' individual contributions could be tracked**
- **Explicit reference to the skills being** used helped pupils to understand the relevance of the lesson
- It is good to give pupils **specific reminders of the skills required for group** work to be successful
- Giving **everyone a clear role within the group** meant that there were no passive learners
- The pupils were fully aware of the **concept of the learning pit** and encouraged to use associated strategies
- The use of **Kahoot as a revision tool**
- Offering a **choice of starter activities** supported the inclusion of all pupils
- The use of a **self assessment checklist** at the end of the lesson was a successful summary of progress
- Constant **references to time limits** helped to keep the pupils focused
- It would be worthwhile exploring what **motivates** pupils more
- Encouragement used throughout the lesson to develop **resilience**

Aim for next learning visit/ next steps for pair/ trio

Around a third of the reports made reference to introducing or exploring collaborative learning strategies. In addition to this, the points below are examples of some of the action points identified:

*Denotes more than one similar response

- Provide more time to ensure that **peer feedback is deeper and more meaningful**, and peers can carry out what has been suggested.
- Incorporate **think/pair/share** strategy
- Incorporate a **WAGOLL wall**
- Refer back to **learning intentions and success criteria throughout** the lesson, rather than just at the start
- Continue to build on **restorative practices** and conversations
- Better use of **plenaries** such as exit passes (**)
- Explore more effective **peer assessment**
- Less direct teaching and **more paired and group activities**
- Use of **self assessment checklists** as plenary activities
- More **strict use of time limits** to help keep the lesson focused
- To ensure the pace of the lesson still allows a **plenary to take place**
- Work towards ways to ensure **pupils are more responsible and resilient** and think 'I can't do it-yet'
- Investigate **cross curricular links** between PE and numeracy
- **Meet as a trio before the next round** of learning visits to discuss what we would like to focus on next

- Discuss the **cross curricular assessment** of literacy
- **Build groups of four from paired work** as this may be more effective
- Further visit to **explore use of IT** for future use in own lessons
- Build on the trio to do **more informal visits**
- Focus on an **area of good practice to share** to develop skills in other areas
- Further development of **restorative practices** (*)

Next steps

As per our School Improvement Plan, we will continue to develop the following:

- Improve consistency of active and collaborative learning across all departments
- Continue to develop practitioner enquiry through the Visible Learning Working Group with a focus, where appropriate, on collaborative strategies
- Further embed a culture of collaborative leadership by sharing practice through the Extended Leadership Team forum and appropriate departmental means

Comments:

Quality Indicator 2.4: Personalised Support

Discussion points on the lesson: (Please ensure that these discussions take place as soon as possible after the Learning Visit.)

Discussion points on area of good practice to share: (Please ensure that these discussions take place as soon as possible after the Learning Visit.)

Aim for next learning visit/ next steps for pair/ trio

Next Learning Visit: May 2018

Learning and Teaching self-assessment

Below is a list of different strands that contribute to highly effective learning and teaching. This list is by no means exhaustive, but links to areas which have either been a focus in school in recent Improvement Plans, or which will be a focus in session 2017-18.

Please rate yourself using the six point scale below; the same scale as is used in HGIOS 4. This survey is not anonymous as it will be used to help inform the construction of learning trios for Learning Visits. The aim is to link up different staff and departments with a diverse range of skills so that they can share practice and learn from each other.

Name: _____

1. Collaborative learning

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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2. Active learning

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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3. Differentiation to support more able learners

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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4. Differentiation to support less able learners

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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5. Maintaining the pace of learning

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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6. Developing employability skills

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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7. Developing higher order thinking skills

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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8. Encouraging responsibility

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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9. Encouraging resourcefulness

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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10. Encouraging resilience

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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11. Encouraging reflection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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12. Developing a feedback loop

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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13. Peer assessment

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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14. Self assessment

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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15. Engaging in a feedback loop

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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16. Using learning intentions

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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17. Using success criteria

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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18. Digital literacy

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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19. Positive behaviour strategies

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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20. Restorative approaches

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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21. Promoting literacy across the curriculum

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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22. Promoting numeracy across the curriculum

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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23. Promoting health and wellbeing across the curriculum

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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24. Use of questioning

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Unsatisfactory
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