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**Senior Leadership Team Learning Walks October 2018**

The focus of the Learning Walks was **sharing classroom experiences, particularly in the Senior Phase,** and this directly links to the revised DHS Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy.

SLT used an updated version of the Learning Walk document to help gather information based on our agreed 'non-negotiables' and this was also used to provide high quality feedback to individual staff. This document was created using the revised Learning and Teaching policy, focusing mainly on the ‘non-negotiables’, and a number of CLs stated that they have been using this document during their departmental observations for moderation purposes.

Members of SLT spent approximately 25 minutes in a classroom and started at either the beginning or half way through the lesson. As always, the focus was on the learning experiences of the young people and staff were assured that SLT would be talking to them about their learning as and when this was appropriate in the classroom context.

Each of the five members of the Senior Leadership Team selected two periods during the week beginning the 22nd October 2018 in which they would complete Learning Walks.

Once these two periods were identified, they were then allocated two different classes to visit during each of the periods. They were asked to, as appropriate, speak with or observe several learners in each of these lessons to gain an understanding of the learning taking place in the classroom. Therefore, SLT aimed to gain ‘snapshots’ of learners’ experiences in around 18 - 20 different lessons.

Classes were allocated to try to ensure as even a spread as possible across the school and feedback from staff, following the last Learning Walks in May, indicated that they would prefer to know when SLT would be in the classroom. Therefore, a mixture of classroom teachers, new staff and CLs were selected to take part in the Learning Walks. This structured approach was important as it meant that staff felt more prepared and less anxious about these walks. The school is gradually moving towards creating a culture where a member of the Senior Leadership Team could walk into a classroom to simply experience the learning taking place in a range of different classes. This culture will undoubtedly help the school in its journey towards excellence and promote consistency in terms of learning and teaching, in particular the ‘non-negotiables’. The Learning Walk documents are designed to support the classroom teacher and promote reflective practice across the school. Following on from feedback during an ELT meeting, the Learning Walk documents were developed to acknowledge good practice as well as strengths and areas for development.

Following its introduction last session, the Learning Walk document was created and developed to enable SLT members to give staff high quality individualistic feedback.

The discussions undertaken with pupils and/ or staff varied according to their year group and the context of their learning during the Learning Walk.

**SLT visited the following subjects**: Art (1), Biology (1), Chemistry (1), Classical Studies (1), English (2), French (1), History (1), Hospitality (1), Maths (1), Modern Studies (2), Music (2), RME (1), Practical Electronics (1), PSE (4), Spanish (1) and Modern Languages (1).

The comments below were collated during the Learning Walks. Some are in the words of the learners themselves and others are observations made by the visitors.

**Before the lesson**

* Excellent routines witnessed during this lesson and at other times. Pupils are very aware of the teachers’ expectations when entering the classroom. (Chemistry)
* Very warm welcome given to pupils by teacher and there was a very clear focus from the start of the lesson (PSE)
* The teacher clearly meets the pupils at the classroom door every single lesson. No issues at all despite having some potentially challenging young people in the class (PSE)
* Teacher met the pupils at the classroom door and the materials were all prepared on the tables to allow them to get on task as quickly as possible. (Art)
* Pupils were met at the classroom door and welcomed in by the teacher. It was clear from the beginning that the teacher has developed excellent relationships with the young people (Modern Studies)

**During the lesson**

* Good introduction to the topic by the teacher – very interesting and the pupils were fully engaged throughout the lesson. Excellent slides! (Modern Studies)
* Good revision of previous knowledge at every opportunity. Excellent references to SQA exam/assignment requirements (Chemistry)
* Good, calm ethos in the class to allow learning to take place. Developing positive relationships is a real strength in this classroom (History)
* Pupils immediately began the starter activity without being prompted. A very effective routine has been instilled into this class and pupils engaged with their learning instantly. (Maths)
* A range of pupils were asked open questions throughout the lesson and the majority of the class contributed answers. The pupils clearly benefit from the use of the smartboard and show me boards in this class (Maths)
* The teacher worked the room very well and every pupil was given 1:1 feedback and support throughout this lesson. All pupils were engaged in the task and there was a sense of respect in the classroom. Following discussions with a number of the pupils, it was clear that they all understood why they were developing those particular skills and how it will prepare them for SQA exam/folio. (Practical Electronics)
* Learning intentions and success criteria were particularly strong and the young people confirmed that this happened regularly in the class. They felt that having the expectations explicitly shown at the beginning helped them to focus (Modern Studies)
* Pupils commented that they enjoy the pace of their lessons in Modern Studies as they feel they are being challenged and no time is wasted (Modern Studies)
* Pupils were challenged throughout the lesson by the use of effective questioning and adopting a no hands up approach (French)
* Very good structure to the lesson. Welcomed by teacher – Teacher exposition – Collaborative task – Consolidation of learning/checking of learning using exam type questions (Geography)
* High quality oral feedback was given, as well as detailed written feedback (English)
* Definitely a sense of a warm environment as the pupils were quite open to giving opinions throughout the lesson (PSE)
* Genuinely inclusive – making effort to engage all. There was a clear expectation that all will engage (PSE)
* Skills based lesson that was chunked effectively. Learners were able to critique, compare and learn from one another. Learners felt comfortable when asking questions and each answer was discussed and the facts were checked (Classical Studies)
* Pupils used their initiative when approaching the starter task activities. Excellent structure to the lesson and prior learning was clear following effective questioning (Biology)
* Pupils were given opportunities to reflect on their learning and any discussion was purely about the take at hand. Prior learning was explicitly linked to this lesson and the pupils understood what was expected of them (Hospitality)

**Towards the end**

* Good use of praise was used during the plenary to encourage participation (Science)
* The plenary for this lesson was based on the homework being set and how the skills they will be using will prepare them for their SQA exam. This gave the pupils context for the homework and they were all engaged during this plenary discussion (Practical Electronics)
* The learning was confirmed during the plenary and Class Dojo was used to encourage participation as well as praise pupils (French)
* All pupils left the classroom in a calm and orderly manner following an effective plenary (PSE)
* Pupils left the classroom in a very calm and orderly fashion. The teachers expectations were clear and an effective routine put in place (Classics)
* Pupils were given the opportunity to reflect on their own learning during the plenary (Chemistry)

**Learning Walks October 2018 – Staff Feedback**

















**Next steps**

The next round of Learning Walks will be carried out during the week beginning Monday 18th March and the focus for these walks will be determined at the beginning of next term. Staff prefer the snapshot approach to the Learning Walks based on the feedback gathered follow this round and this will be discussed in greater depth at ELT.

Effective questioning has been identified as an area that still requires improvement following this round of Learning Walks. There was evidence of strong practice in this area in a few classes observed during the Learning Walks and the Sharing Good Practice working group are currently planning another questioning based session during the morning of the January in-service day.

As a school, we continue to work towards continuous improvement and ensuring consistency across the school, in terms of learning and teaching, is one of the main priorities in light of our recent inspection. The Learning Walks have allowed SLT to gauge where we are as a school in relation to this following the whole school review and HMIe inspection. Consistency of our ‘non-negotiables’ or key aspects of the revised learning and teaching policy can only be achieved by continuing to take a formalised approach to classroom observations and CLs have already expressed an interest in using the Learning Walk observation paperwork for their own moderation purposes at departmental level. CLs have also expressed an interest in being directly involved in the Learning Walks and this will be built into the final round of walks that will take place in May 2019.

The staff feedback clearly indicates that the clash of the Learning Visits and Learning Walks caused confusion and further stress at a busy time of year. This will be discussed during ELT and working group meetings to identify any potential changes to the school calendar for next year.