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**Senior Leadership Team Learning Walks March 2019**

The focus of the Learning Walks was **sharing classroom experiences, particularly in the BGE,** and this directly links to the 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.

Eight representatives from Pupil Voice played an important role in this round of Learning Walks. A Pupil Voice version of the Learning Walk document was inspired by the new ‘wee HGIOS’ and the reps identified the most important aspects of learning and teaching chapter. Pupils helped to co-create this new document along with SLT and this allowed them to record their observations from each lesson. The reps demonstrated an impressive use of the language of learning and clearly understand the key aspects of a DHS lesson.

Members of SLT and Pupil Voice 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. Pupil Voice shared their observations with a member of SLT and this was fed back to the member of staff.

Each of the five members of the Senior Leadership Team selected two periods during the week beginning the 18th March 2019 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 October, 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. The development of the Pupil Voice document ensures that there’s consistency in regards to expectations of learning and teaching in the classroom.

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**: Biology (1), Business (1), CDT (2), Chemistry (1), Classical Studies (1), English (2), French (1), Geography (1), History (1), Home Economics (2), Maths (3), Modern Studies (1), RMPS (1), PE (1) and Science (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 practice was witnessed as the pupils were welcomed into the classroom by the teacher. Clear routines have been established and all pupils were engaged with the starter activity without any prompt from the teacher. (English)
* Very warm welcome given to pupils by teacher and confirming prior learning was evident during the starter activity. Good reinforcement of previous lessons. (Business)
* A structured lesson plan was provided and a good rapport was evident throughout. Questioning technique was strong and checking understanding seemed a natural aspect of the lesson (French)
* Good collaboration with learning assistant to settle class and provide support to meet needs of learners (Maths)

**During the lesson**

* Learners leading learning throughout the lesson and created many opportunities for learners to develop their higher order thinking skills (Classical studies)
* Good pace of lesson and all the learners were engaged. Incorporated opportunities for development of employability skills through group discussions (Geography)
* Very organised and creative task which allowed pupils to make choices throughout the lesson (CDT)
* Teacher linked learning to previous learning and the learners were able to link different aspects of their learning together. Good use of open questions throughout the lesson (Chemistry)
* Good use of ‘wrong answers’ – asking other pupils to help peers but still including original pupil (Maths)
* Good clear explanations given by the teacher. The class were given an incorrect answer that they then had to identify and correct (Maths)
* Good feedback was ongoing throughout the lesson and 1:1 support was provided where necessary (HE)
* Key skills were highlighted during the initial presentation and the pupils were challenged through the use of effective questioning. All pupils were fully engaged and were keen to contribute to the lesson (English)
* Excellent support put in place to ensure that all learners are achieving and accessing the content of the lesson. A respectful environment has been established and the pupils were leading their own learning by creating their own games (PE)
* Pupils were challenged throughout the lesson by the use of effective questioning and adopting a no hands up approach (French)
* Lots of praise given and the strength of pupil-teacher relationship was evident (PE)
* Pupils led a whole class debate and everyone was encouraged to contribute. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the debate and it became more natural as the lesson went on. The teacher simply needed to facilitate and ensured they had ownership of the learning (Modern Studies)
* Learning intentions and success criteria discussed and all pupils understood what was expected of them throughout the lesson. The LI and SC were referenced during the lesson to reinforce the key messages and goals. (RMPS)
* The teacher has created a very inclusive and respectful environment where they are comfortable to ask questions to confirm their understanding. Good use of open and closed questions to gauge each pupils level of understanding (Biology)

**Towards the end**

* The use of challenge terminology was excellent and the whole lesson was brought together very effectively at the end (Biology)
* The pupils used show me boards to identify the lessons most effective contributor. The teacher clearly linked the lesson to the development of their employability skills and future careers (Modern studies)
* Effective plenary was used to consolidate the learning that took place in the lesson and the pupils were given plenty opportunities to reflect on their learning (Chemistry)
* All pupils left the classroom in a calm and orderly manner following an effective plenary (French)
* Pupils were calm and efficient when putting away equipment and they clearly listened to the instructions given by the teacher to ensure that there was enough time available to reflect on their learning (PE)

**Learning Walks March 2019 – Staff Feedback**

















**Next steps**



The next round of Learning Walks will be carried out during the week beginning Monday 20th May. 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.

The quality of questioning seems to have improved following the latest workshop led by the Sharing Good Practice working group. There is still work to be done in this area and pupils can be challenged further through questioning to promote the use of higher order thinking skills.

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.

The involvement of Pupil Voice in the Learning Walks received a mixed response from staff but 64% of staff involved fully understood why they were involved in the walks. 72% of staff involved in the Learning Walks would be open to further pupil involvement in these walks. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and found it overwhelmingly positive. It became clear that a next step for the school in session 19/20 should be to develop separate Learning and Teaching policies for the BGE and Senior Phase as some of the key aspects of the current policy are not relevant for senior classes and more aimed at the BGE. The development of the Pupil Voice Learning Walk document using ‘wee HGIOS’ was commended during the thematic inspection by HMIe in March and they were impressed by their use of the language of learning throughout their visit. The feedback from this thematic inspection, which was shared by the Headteacher, is further evidence that the inclusion of Pupil Voice in the Learning Walks will further enhance the young people’s learning experiences across the school.