

APPROACHES TO LEARNING VISITS

Learning visits play a key role in identifying and sharing good practice in learning and teaching and assuring quality as part of school self-evaluation. Approaches to learning visits should, therefore, be managed as an integral component of a whole-school quality improvement process. Sharing classroom practice is a two way process at the heart of collegiality and all visits should take place within a climate of trust and support.

Learning visits are one means of evaluating the quality of learning and teaching. Evidence-based self-evaluation should also draw upon other activities including monitoring of forward plans, sampling of pupils' work, analysis of assessment data, and consideration of the views of staff, pupils and parents.

A number of key principles/processes should inform our use of learning visits. These are dependent upon the context of the visit.

1. Learning visits linked to school improvement priorities.

- a. Learning visits contribute to the gathering of whole school information relating to the quality of learning and teaching. These visits will have a specific focus which will be communicated to all staff via the annual school improvement plan and associated self-evaluation calendar. The focus will tend to be the learners' experience. Evaluative judgements on particular teachers will not be the priority.
- b. Learning visits conducted by staff working collaboratively in learning and teaching communities to share good practice and support staff development.

2. Learning visits conducted during a planned school or local authority review

- a. School and local authority reviews are scheduled for the session. These may be whole school reviews, thematic reviews, faculty reviews etc. The focus for the learning visits and how staff can access feedback will be communicated prior to the review.
- b. HMIe engagement necessitates learning visits. Whilst the school and local authority are given some notice of inspection it is not possible to agree learning visits in advance.

3. Learning visits conducted as part of the annual PRD process and agreed CLPL

- a. Learning visits as part of the annual PRD process will have an agreed focus and take place at an agreed time. At least one of the visits will be undertaken by a promoted member of staff.
- b. Learning visits are agreed between the teacher and reviewer.
- c. Subsequent learning visits may be used to support improvement in practice.

- d. Support with learning and teaching practice agreed as part of CLPL will be facilitated, including access to sharing good practice and appropriate training.

Conduct

Learning visits should not interfere with on-going work in the classroom.

Notes may be made during the visit. Any pro forma used for note taking will be shared prior to the visit.

In the event of any person conducting a learning visit observing practice which is unsafe or below what may be deemed an acceptable standard this will be reported to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will decide upon an appropriate course of action.

Follow-Up

The provision of feedback should involve discussion between the observer and the teacher to recognise areas of good practice and identify areas for development.

Access to continuing professional development in relation to learning visits should be facilitated.