

Proposed Agenda for Literacy Learning Walk

Purpose of the Learning Walk:

A learning walk is a focused journey around the school to

- Find evidence to support the identification of an area for development
- Enable visioning for further improvement
- Observe the putting into practice of a new approach
- Assess the impact of the implementation of the new approach, whether it be an agreed initiative and/or strategy, and to identify what else needs to be done
- Present evidence to show the consistency of the implementation of this new approach

Definition of literacy (taking into account the context of special schools):

The basic definition is the ability to read and write. Jim Rose (Rose Review, 2006) defines literacy as the four strands of language – reading, writing, speaking and listening. Speaking and listening skills underpin all learning and are the start of all other literacy skills. In addition ICT capability contributes to the deployment of basic literacy skills.

Ofsted has published a number of guidance materials recently that should inform the learning walk.

- English at the Crossroads (June 2009)
- Reading By Six (November 2010)
- Excellence in English (May 2011)
- Moving English Forward (March 2012)

The key messages are that schools are now expected to;

- Increase emphasis on how all subjects develop literacy – at primary and secondary levels, e.g.;
 - Ensure that reading accuracy and comprehension are developed, including skills such as
 - Decoding and encoding text – through the teaching of synthetic phonics
 - Skimming & Scanning
 - Critical analysis
- Ensure that writing is developed, with a focus on
 - Spelling
 - Grammar & punctuation
 - Handwriting
 - Writing for different audiences & purposes
- Ensuring that speaking & listening are developed, including skills in
 - Discussion
 - Rhetoric & analysis
 - Oratory

There is recognition that pupils who have speech and language and communication difficulties will have difficulties with the Yr.1 phonics text. There is very good guidance in “Communicating Phonics”, The Communication Trust (2012), as to the interventions and resources that schools should adopt for pupils with individual communication needs. For pupils with severe, complex and multiple needs, it is the importance of developing communication skills which underpins literacy

Taking into account the needs of the pupils in special schools, particularly SLD/PMLD schools, the learning walk will focus upon how literacy across the curriculum develops the communication skills of all pupils.

Evidence will include;

- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of policy & planning
- Brief visits to lessons
- Walks around the school during non-lesson time
- Discussions with relevant staff
- Scrutiny of student’s work
- Scrutiny of the learning environment
- Discussions with students

Suggestions for format of the day:

Focus	With whom?	Comment
Review of lesson observation evidence		What evidence is there in recent lesson observations that all adults are promoting communication / literacy?
Scrutiny of policy & planning		Is there a school LITERACY policy? How does the school know it is being implemented across the curriculum? Discussion with Literacy lead – to include focus on teaching of phonics. Analysis of sample of curriculum planning across subjects and key stages (EYFS, KS1,KS2) How is LITERACY planned across the curriculum?
How are pupil’s PLP/IEP literacy targets addressed in lesson?		Scrutiny of sample of PLP/IEPs and literacy lesson plans. Is there a match? Is differentiation good enough?
How well are the staff trained in the teaching and learning of communication / literacy skills		Review of CPD programme for literacy for groups of staff (teaching and non-teaching)

– and what is the evidence that this training is implemented and having an impact on progress and achievement in literacy?		
What is the contribution of ICT to promote & develop literacy		Discussion with ICT co-ordinator(s)
Tracking progress and achievement in communication / literacy		Scrutiny of progress in S/L/R/W for different groups of pupils
Brief visits to lessons		This is to note how many opportunities there are in brief lesson visits to promote literacy
Walks around the school during non-lesson time		Break and lunch times are good times to see LITERACY in action! Can you provide me with an escort?
Discussions with relevant staff		Have a think about which staff could contribute re LITERACY activities in the school
Scrutiny of student’s work		We could look at some photographic evidence and samples of personalised learning plans – does the evidence support the literacy targets?
Scrutiny of the learning environment – how does it promote literacy		A walk around the school would be useful here.
Discussions with students		Could we have another short discussion where the children talk about their experiences of communication and literacy and visitors to the school related to literacy?
Preparation for life – life skills relating to literacy		Can we meet with the PSHCE coordinator and go through the PSHCE programme. And discuss how you explicitly develop pupils’ life skills?
Literacy in the wider community		How do you develop this? Can we audit the opportunities for pupils to participate in communication in the wider community and extracurricular activities?
Equalities and discrimination		Do all groups of pupils in the school have good access to literacy/communication opportunities?

Programme will therefore need to include;

1. Meetings with
 - a. Lead for Progress & Achievement
 - b. Lead for Teaching & Learning
 - c. Lead for Literacy
 - d. Group of teachers
 - e. Group of TAs
 - f. Lead(s) for ICT across the curriculum
 - g. Group of pupils
2. Scrutiny of planning, PLPs, pupils' folders of work/outcomes - members of SLT + JM
3. Learning walk during lessons
4. Learning walk at lunchtime / break time
5. Feedback to SLT