LEARNING VISIT POLICY

Agreed June 2023

Clackmannanshire Council | Comhairle Siorrachd Chlach Mhanann

www.clacks.gov.uk

Contents

Purpose of Learning Visits

Learning visits play a key role in:
- Supporting reflective self-evaluation and professional dialogue.
- Identifying and sharing effective practice.
- Contributing to high quality school self-evaluation.

Approaches to learning visits should, therefore, be developed collegiately within a culture and climate of trust and respect.

Learning visits support the evaluation of learning and teaching and learner's experience in the classroom. Evidence-based self-evaluation for school improvement should draw upon a range of activities including sampling of learner's work, learning conversations, analysis of assessment data, and the views of staff, children and young people, parents/carers and partners.

Key Principles

A number of key principles should underpin learning visits as part of an empowered, self-improving and collegiate system.

As part of this system learning visits should:

1. Take place within a strong culture and climate of trust, respect and collegiality.
2. Nurture teacher professionalism.
3. Provide and facilitate reflective professional dialogue.
4. Support self-evaluation across the Professional Standards.
5. Inform the consultation process as part of strategic planning.
6. Support teacher agency.
7. Link to the PRD process where appropriate.

Key Components

Maximising the benefits of observing learners' experiences requires that the process be meaningful.

Key components include:

1. An agreed approach to the learning visit process which would include a maximum of 3 learning visits per academic year as part of the schools' Quality Improvement Calendar and/or working time agreement
2. An agreed and shared focus for learning visits.
3. Meaningful feedback and professional dialogue delivered timeously at an agreed time by those involved.
4. A direct relationship between the purpose of the learning visit and the school's improvement priorities as identified in the improvement plan.

It is important for teachers to have opportunities to undertake learning visits and to have others visit their classes. By doing both they learn from, and with, those around them.

Context of Learning Visits

The context of learning visits will vary:

Learning visits linked to school improvement priorities:

1. Contribute to the gathering of whole school information relating to the quality of learners' experiences.
2. Have a specific focus, agreed and shared with staff via the school improvement plan and associated quality improvement calendar.
3. Ensure that the learners' experience is central.
4. Are agreed and conducted by staff working collaboratively in and across schools and ELCs/Learning Communities/Clusters/FVWL RIC and beyond.

Learning visits during a planned local authority school visit or HMIe Inspection:

1. Local authority visits and HMIe Inspections 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.
2. HMIe engagement necessitates learning visits. Whilst the school and local authority are given some notice of inspection it is not possible to agree HMIe learning visits in advance.
3. Schools should apply flexibility to their planned formal observations to take account of any additional learning visits by HMIe or the local authority. Formal learning visits by external bodies take priority.

Learning visits as part of Professional Learning and the PRD process:

1. Have an agreed focus as part of an individual's Professional Review and Development Plan.
2. May be used to support and individual's practice where agreed by the teacher and observer.
3. Facilitate the sharing of effective practice.
4. Provide opportunity for reflection and professional dialogue.

Supporting learning visits in a strong culture and climate of trust, respect and collegiality

Procedures and paperwork used to support learning visits should be developed and agreed in a collegiate manner (Appendix 1: optional paperwork exemplar). Professional dialogue and self-reflection should be central to the learning visit process with time allocated to facilitate this. Where written feedback is used it should be shared, agreed and signed by teacher and observer within 5 working days of the visit. Any disagreement should be recorded as part of this process.

Learning visits:
1. Have an identified and clearly understood purpose.
2. Are proportionate in duration.
3. Support reflective professional dialogue between observer and teacher.
4. Provide support and signposting to relevant professional learning.
5. Identify effective practice.

Key Considerations

There is no single set of procedures for learning visits which will suit all schools. The process and format will vary to best meet the needs and context of each. However, consideration should be given to the following:

1. Involving teachers from different schools, stages, subjects.
2. Maintaining a clear focus on the learner's experience and learner's needs.
3. Ensuring reflective professional dialogue is embedded in the process.
4. Using effective coaching and mentoring strategies during professional dialogue

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Optional Learning Visit Exemplar

Appendix 2 – Trade Union Guidance and Useful Links

Signed   Date   24/7/23

Colin Bruce, CEO

Signed   Date   24/7/23

Karen Farrell, EIS

Review December 2024

Appendix 1 – **Optional Learning Visit Exemplar**

Observation of Learner's experiences

Date	Time	Curriculum Focus	Class/Individual

QI 2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment	
Engagement and Meeting needs	Positive relationships, motivated, engaged, interact Purpose of lessons/learning made clear, Responsibility for learning, Leading learning , Range of teaching approaches, Digital technology, Questioning, higher order thinking skills Personalisation and choice Pace, Support, challenge and enjoyment Relevance
Assessment/inclusion/wellbeing	Effective interventions based on sound assessment
Attainment and outcomes Groups and individuals	Formative assessment and well timed interventions leading to effective learning. Feedback supports progress in learning

Notes

Analysis:

Areas for clarification	Strengths	Areas for development

Key Points from reflective professional dialogue:

Other Comments/Disagreement

Signed (teacher)_____ Date_____

Signed (observer)_____ Date_____

Appendix 2 – **Trade Union Guidance**

SSTA
SSTA members are directed to the website https://ssta.org.uk/.

Information can be found in the miscellaneous section of the Advice Notes part of the website. This is a members only area of the website so a login will be required. For further information, please contact the District Secretary.

EIS
EIS Clackmannanshire Local Association Executive Committee refers members to the LNCT Agreements section of the local association's website: https://www.eis.org.uk/clackmannan/lnctagreements. In particular, we recommend that this policy be read in conjunction with the EIS Guidance on Classroom Observations:

https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/Clackmannan/images/LNCT/Agreements/EIS%20advice%20on%20Classroom%20and%20Observation%20Monitoring.pdf,

and the EIS document, Teacher Professionalism and the Scottish Parliament:

https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/Clackmannan/images/LNCT/Agreements/Parliament%20brochure_education.pdf.

USEFUL LINKS

GTCS Professional Standards for Teachers :
https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards-for-teachers/

How Good is Our School 4:
https://education.gov.scot/media/2swjmnbs/frwk2_hgios4.pdf