



Community Services: Education

Argyll House
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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

Learning Visit and Monitoring

Lesson learning visit is undoubtedly one of the most powerful tools for improving learning and teaching in any school. For that reason it is vital that all schools within Argyll and Bute work at creating the trust and support that will allow lesson learning visit and monitoring to flourish in a positive environment.

It is accepted by Argyll and Bute Council that teachers, after full registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland, do not usually require day to day supervision and direction. Lesson learning visit for the purpose of developing and improving the pupil learning experience should be within the context of improving learning and teaching based upon a collegiate approach to school improvement and form part of self, departmental and school evaluation.

Lesson learning visit should encourage and emphasise team work, discussion with colleagues, working with peers, consultation, support and improvement, this should be a collegiate process.

Lesson learning visit for the purpose of developing and improving the pupil learning experience generally across the school must not be associated with disciplinary procedures. There is a separate policy for disciplinary matters that may have a formal observation element contained therein.

Education Scotland and HMIE before them have consistently stressed that the main criterion for Lesson learning visit and monitoring is the extent to which it improves the process of teaching and learning in schools.

The practice of Lesson monitoring and observation is part of the professional relationships among teachers within a school and a way in which they work together. When done in an atmosphere of support and trust it will fulfil its potential to improve learning and teaching.

Curriculum for Excellence has made explicit the professional responsibility of the teacher and this must be recognised in the observation and monitoring of colleagues. This should not exclude the opportunity for promoted post holders to visit classes with the purpose of supporting the teacher or individual classes or pupils in an effort to develop and improve the pupil learning experience.

Example of good practice:

- Consultation on agreed purpose focus and timing of Lesson learning visit.
- An increase emphasis on the use of peer observation.
- Widespread use of short period observations 15 – 30 minutes in length.
- Procedures for observation will be known across the Authority.
- Observations should always be followed by time for discussion.
- Will often be done as part of cooperative teaching.
- Will often be part of a reciprocal arrangement.
- Will focus solely on learning and teaching.
- The pace of development and frequency of learning visits should be proportionate and part of the ongoing professional dialogue taking place in the school and could be reflected in the working time agreement.
- Pupils views could be reflected as part of the learning visit.

If individual teachers are to be supported by promoted staff, this will involve access to their lessons by appropriate promoted staff. Such access may be informal and designed to facilitate communication.

When more formal visits take place there should be agreement within the school on the focus and timing of any visits.

Lesson learning visit should be within the context of learning and teaching and the overall welfare of the school and pupils in the school.

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services
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