

Gleniffer High School



Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Appendices

January 2019

Contents

Formative Assessment	3
Approaches to Formative Assessment.....	5
Learning Styles	9
Teaching Styles.....	11
The Three Domain Model	12
Show My Homework.....	14
Learning Environment	15
References.....	21
Useful Websites	21



Formative Assessment

At the core of *Assessment is for Learning* is the need to redress the imbalance between **summative** assessment (which takes place *after* learning) and **formative** assessment (which takes place *during* learning and thus shapes it).

There are two actions at the heart of formative assessment. The first is the perception by *the learner* of a gap between a desired goal and her or his present state of knowledge, understanding or skill. The second is the action *the learner* then takes to close that gap.

Teachers first share the learning objective with pupils and then offer and use feedback to close the gap. As pupils become more experienced in the process of working towards shared learning outcomes, they should be encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and opportunities for self and peer assessment could be introduced.

Research such as *Inside the Black Box* provides ample evidence that standards improve if formative assessment is used effectively and consistently. It also shows that there is significant room for improvement in its use. Many of the *Assessment is for Learning* strategies described in this policy document work towards this improvement.

Successful formative assessment depends on different factors. From the outset, pupils need to believe that improvements in their learning are more likely to occur through their *efforts* than through their *ability*. The belief that improvement is possible for everyone regardless of ability should underpin every activity designed to harness classroom assessment to raise standards. Teachers have an important role to play in shifting pupils' attention from how clever they are to the *effort* they are willing to put in.

The active involvement of pupils in their own learning is another essential. Formative assessment can be undervalued and perhaps even misunderstood when it's presented as just good teaching. The real purpose for teachers in improving its use is to give their pupils the capacity to assess themselves more effectively. So, while formative assessment provides a teacher with a bridge between assessment and teaching, formative assessment is essentially a way of creating independent, reflective learners, who can plan and assess their own progress.

Main characteristics of formative assessment:

- Provides effective feedback to pupils about their own learning.
- Involves pupils in their own learning.
- Adjusts teaching to take account of assessment.
- Recognises the profound impact assessment has on motivation and self-esteem of pupils through a focus on effort rather than ability.
- Encourages pupils to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

Learning Intentions:

This is a way of sharing the criteria for learning and ensuring that pupils are clear about what is to be learned and what success should look like.

Teacher uses introduces the lesson, topic or unit and the aspect of learning to be undertaken throughout. They can then be used in different ways to reinforce key elements of the learning tasks in follow-up work including marking.

Research shows that teachers are good at telling pupils what to do and how to do it (the task or activity) but not so good at making clear what is to be learned (the *learning intention* or *outcome*) and how to recognise success (the *success criteria*).

It is very important to set a clear distinction between what they are doing and what they will *learn* from it. Don't express the learning intention as an activity. For example, avoid saying "We are going to...", "We are going to be using..." It is better to say, "We are *learning* to..." Written in the first person it is more likely to engage the pupil.

Success Criteria:

Pupils should be clear about what is to be learned and what success should look like. This is a way of helping children to relate specific success criteria to the learning intentions identified for the task in hand.

These shared criteria are displayed in the classroom and are repeated by the children at the beginning of the lesson, thus appealing to all types of learners. (Aural, visual, etc.) For example, learning intentions can be written up in advance and then used to settle the class at the start of the lesson. Alternatively, a blank bubble can be prepared and the actual intention written in consultation with the children. A number of teachers have developed imaginative ways of reinforcing the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, for example on flip charts at the front of the room, printed on worksheets, on laminated bookmarks, etc. It is not thought enough just to *tell* them.

Success criteria can be used when completing peer and self-assessment activities. Any marking by the teacher should be based on the success criteria. Pupils need to know why their work is at level C and, more importantly, they need to know how to get to the next level.

Approaches to Formative Assessment

This section details a variety of approaches to formative assessment. Over time, each approach will be implemented, and a reflection feedback sheet will detail any learnings (see corresponding numbers in the relevant section of the policy folder).

1. Traffic Lights

This is a means of promoting self-assessment. Individuals indicate their level of understanding or feelings by showing the appropriate coloured card. It is useful at various stages in the lesson – but particularly in mini-plenaries and plenaries. Teachers need to ensure that a sign is on display in the classroom explaining an agreed definition of the traffic light colours.

One specific application for traffic lights is in evaluating strengths and weaknesses to plan revision. Pupils could use traffic lights to assess a list of key words or topics on which the test will be set. By doing this, they can identify the areas where they feel their learning is secure, which they mark in green, and where they need to concentrate their efforts, which they mark in amber or red. These traffic lights then form the basis of a revision plan.

2. Show a Fist or a Palm

Similar to traffic lighting for checking understanding. Pupils are asked to show an open palm if they fully understand, or a clenched fist if they haven't a clue. Anything in between – including two fingers - indicates partial understanding of different degrees.

3. Give It Thumbs

Thumbs is a simple way of checking understanding, assessing a group's opinion, looking for consensus or checking how people are feeling. The usual convention is: thumbs up – complete agreement; thumbs down – definitely not; thumbs wavering or horizontal – not certain.

Thumbs can also be used to group pupils to go over work that has caused some difficulty. For example, pairing *down thumbs* with *up thumbs* pupils to iron out misunderstandings through discussion. Everyone benefits from this, since *thumbs up* pupils reinforce their own learning by having to explain it.

4. Think, Pair and Share

Think, pair share is a well-used technique for encouraging classroom participation and interaction. Pupils consider a question independently and write down as many answers, ideas or suggestions as they can (*think*). Then they discuss/pool ideas with a partner (*pair*) before *sharing* them with the class or small group.

This helps to create a climate of confidence where pupils are willing to share their thoughts. It helps all pupils to learn by encouraging a sustained interaction between thinking and talking, both individually and in groups.

You can also give pupils a choice of answers and ask them to vote. Another idea is for pupils to write down an answer and read out a selected few.

5. Two Stars and a Wish

The aim is to give pupils timely feedback about the quality of their work and how to make it better. To aid motivation, it is usually important to emphasise the positive when assessing a pupil's work. This is just as important when the pupils are assessing themselves. *Two stars and a wish* is a very effective way of accentuating the positive.

Feedback makes reference to two strengths in the work (*two stars*) and one area for future development (*a wish*). This enables learners to build on prior learning and breaks the process of improvement into manageable steps. Easily remembered, the jingle emphasises what is good about a piece of work while also asking pupils to think about ways to make what they have done better.

This can be used in Peer and Self-Assessment by the pupils referring to the learning intentions and success criteria related to the piece of work. They indicate with 2 stars part of the work they wish to compliment and circle an area for improvement. A way of “Closing the Gap.”

6. Learning Logs

Learning Logs are a means of recording how the children are learning, their progress and problem areas. They allow pupils to keep notes of their thoughts and feelings about their work. Time must be set aside in class to complete these and to help pupils use them conscientiously. A log need be no more than a ring binder and sheets of paper.

Learning Logs give teachers a clear picture of progress of a child’s thoughts and feelings. The teacher should be able to gather information for progress reports, etc.

Teachers could prepare a list of sentence beginnings to help pupils in their evidence but beware that the pupils only rely on these instead of thinking about their learning. Examples could be –

- The most important thing I have learned this week was...
- What I found most interesting today was...
- What surprised me most was...
- What I enjoyed most about today was...
- One thing that still puzzles me is...
- What I need help with is...
- What pleased me most was...
- Today might have been more helpful to me if...

7. No Hands Up

By establishing a rule of “no hands up” in a question-and-answer session, distractions are reduced, and pupils have more time to think. Because of this, everyone is expected to be able to offer an answer, even if it is “I don’t know.”

The aim is to increase high quality interactions, based on thoughtful questions, careful listening and reflective responses. No hands up can work well when used with increasing wait time to help students think about their answers.

8. Wait Time (or Thinking Time)

This is a way of allowing time to elapse between asking a question and asking for answers. The point is to enable pupils to think, to link the question to knowledge they already possess, before having to articulate the answer.

Research has shown that many teachers leave less than one second after asking a question before, if no answer is forthcoming, asking another question or answering their own question. It takes time for children to absorb the question and formulate the answer.

You should leave at least three seconds. This acknowledges that thinking takes time and that pupils should have more of it. It also implies that the pupil, not the teacher, should be thinking. Wait time:

- Stops children from *blurting out* ideas
- Provides space for fuller, more thoughtful, answers

- Involves more of your class
- Decreases failure of response
- Increases confidence and increase the frequency of questions raised by pupils of all abilities
- Encourages pupils to improve on others' answers

Increasing wait time is not easy. Slowing the pace of classroom discussion is hard if you feel under pressure to cover content or pupils are not used to long silences. Discuss the changes you want to make and explain why.

9. Mind Maps and other Graphic Organisers

Graphic organisers like mind maps, Plus Minus and Interesting (PMI) and ladder diagrams can be used to scaffold children's efforts as they learn the skills they need for effective peer- and self-assessment.

Having pupils develop a mind map at the beginning and the end of a topic and using it with a partner to explore understandings can help both pupils to see key areas they have identified or missed and link to related ideas.

For example, a mind map could be used to help children give feedback to each other on their stories. The title of the story is written in a circle in the middle of the map and various success criteria (e.g. Punctuation: you have used full stops; ending: you have rounded your story off well) are entered on branches around the centre circle. Pupils are asked to read their partner's story and then use a green pen to circle the things they have done well and a red pen to circle the things that could be improved.

10. Carouselling

Carousel brainstorming gets everyone working together in small groups to quickly create lots of ideas. It is most effective when several ideas or kinds of ideas are being managed at once.

Pupils work in groups of three to five. Each group brainstorms a specific "way" for three to five minutes. Then the groups move to the next station to add new ideas to those already devised by the last group at that station. The carousel continues until every group has visited each station. Groups then return to their original station to review the list they find there.

Groups can simply reflect on the range of ideas generated or they can be asked to do something with them. As an adaptation to the process, each group can leave one person behind as it moves on to the next station to explain and clarify the group's ideas. A less energetic way of turning the carousel is to make the lists go around instead of the groups.

11. Jigsaw

The *jigsaw* method gives everyone in a group the opportunity to develop a variety of skills to use when working with others. In particular, it gives everyone a chance to be both proactive and responsive.

The technique involves "piecing together" a range of different inputs to a specific topic. For example, where a topic under study can be separated into four sub-topics, the class is first divided into groups of four pupils. Inside each group, pupils take responsibility for one of the four sub-topics which they will teach to the others later on. The class then breaks into four new groups, each comprising the pupils that are responsible for one of the sub-topics. In these groups, pupils learn about their sub-topics from texts, the teacher and other sources. Pupils then return to their original group of four and, in turn, teach one another their sub-topic.

12. Comment Only Marking

Grades or marks on their own do not improve achievement and research backs this up. But research also suggests that marks *and* comments do not improve achievement either, while comments on their own do. Black and William believe that, when we are given a mark, our ego kicks in and we simply react emotionally to the mark and fail to register the comments. Advice then, is that as far as possible teachers should reduce the frequency of marks and the importance given to them and, where possible, use comment only marking. It is felt that in early secondary sharing marks with children and parents once a year is enough and when working towards national examinations in middle and upper secondary once a term is appropriate.

13. Marking Less to Achieve More

Marking less to achieve more doesn't happen in isolation from the other classroom strategies to improve assessment for learning. The real purpose of marking is to give good feedback to children about how they did against a specific learning intention and some ideas about how they can improve. To make good use of our marking, learners need to know what it tells them and how they should respond to it. Teachers can use three strategies to help to help develop these skills in learners:

- ***Do more marking with the whole class***

Whole class activities, such as modeling using a specific example of a learner's work can help pupils practice using learning intentions, success criteria and specific ground rules when marking their own work or participating in peer assessment.

Children can be supported in marking their own work by providing prompt sheets to help them focus on the important points.

- ***Do less marking yourself away from pupils***

Classroom situations can be created to allow teachers to give immediate verbal feedback or short written comments while working with groups or individuals.

Prompts can be written in jotters to help children improve their work. This can be at different levels:

- A reminder ("Say more about")
- A question ("Can you describe how")
- An example (offer a choice of actual words or phrases).

- ***When you do mark, make sure that it counts***

Use comment only marking as much as possible, and only give marks when necessary.

Don't focus on too many things in the one piece of work. Corrections and comments should put responsibility back onto the pupil who should spend more time responding to your marking than you spend doing it. They will need time in class to respond, too.

Challenge more able pupils by not giving them a grade, but a plus, a minus or an equals depending on how it compares with their last piece of work.

Learning Styles

A learning style is a preferred way of thinking, processing and understanding information. We all have preferred learning and thinking styles. Research has shown that learners score 'significantly higher' on assessments when they learn in the way that fits their preferred style. In order to optimize learning, teachers should give pupils as many opportunities as possible to work in the style that best suits them.

This is a complex area and there is an increasing amount of research evidence available. There are many different methods of identifying learning styles. However, we will concentrate on 2 – Right/Left Hemisphere Dominance and Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (VAK).

Right/Left Hemisphere Dominance

In the same way that we are mostly right- or left-handed, it seems that most of us have a right or left dominance when it comes to learning. This dominance becomes particularly noticeable in times of stress or when learning something new or difficult.

Right brain learners like to deal with the overview or 'big picture' first and then the details.

Left brain learners process information in pieces and are more concerned with the detail than the overview.

Good Practice for Whole Brain Learning

A good lesson will reach the intuitive, 'big picture' learners and the logical, step-by-step learners by incorporating a variety of approaches.

LEFT-BRAIN PREFERENCE	RIGHT-BRAIN PREFERENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline the details of the task• Provide precise, step-by-step instructions• Provide practice of skills pupils have learned• Expect working at a steady pace• Provide factual detail and teach for recall• Provide clear routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview the 'big picture'• Allow opportunities to be original and imaginative• Allow exploration of new skills• Allow for pupils to work in bursts of energy, with slower, less-productive periods• Allow for some lack of knowledge of detail, but good understanding of general principles• Allow for pupils who need variety

Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic (VAK) Learners

- Visual Learners – prefer to see information
- Auditory Learners – prefer to hear information
- Kinesthetic Learners – prefer to be physically involved e.g. touching, feeling.

In a mixed ability class approximately one third of pupils will be visual learners, one third auditory and one third kinesthetic. These categories can be further subdivided. Some visual learners will prefer to see text, while others will learn better from diagrams and visual images. Some kinesthetic learners are more tactile, needing to touch and feel during learning while others learn better when their internal feelings and emotions are activated.

Good Practice for Visual Learners

1. Use of posters and displays in classrooms which are referred to by the teacher.
2. Encourage pupils to visualize information as a picture to aid memorization.
3. Board work, OHP's, Data Projectors can be used to present information using colours, diagrams, graphs, charts, illustrations, etc.
4. Encourage pupils to make their own notes and highlight important areas.
5. Use mind maps for revision.
6. Quiet classroom – no verbal distractions.
7. Use of mnemonics.
8. Emphasis key points to cue when to take notes.
9. Memory boards – put item on board, give pupils a minute to remember them, rub off and then get pupils to write down the definitions.
10. Use of DVDs.

Good Practice for Auditory Learners

1. Encourage pupils to ask questions.
2. Encourage pupils to participate in class discussions/debates and make presentations.
3. Read text out aloud.
4. Create musical jingles, raps or chants to aid memorisation.
5. Create mnemonics to aid memorization.
6. Discuss ideas verbally.
7. Recite information repeatedly to increase recall.
8. Begin new material with a brief explanation of what is coming. Conclude with a summary of what has been covered.
9. Include auditory activities such as brainstorming, talking through mind maps.
10. Have learners verbalise the questions.

Good Practice for Kinesthetic Learners

1. Making posters and models.
2. Listening to music can help with studying e.g. personal stereo.
3. Short focus tasks which can allow the pupil to take a 'brain break'.
4. Allow skim reading of materials first before focusing on details.
5. Allowing pupils to write on materials.
6. Encourage the use of coloured pens and highlighters.
7. Where appropriate allow movement in the classroom e.g. carouselling (Assessment is for Learning).
8. Allow pupils to write feedback on the board.
9. Use of mini white board to write answers and then hold them up for checking.
10. Using objects to illustrate points and allow pupils to handle objects.
11. Use role play, mime or drama.
12. Teach pupils note taking methods – use post it notes and flashcards which they can manipulate and move around.
13. Allow time to answer questions (wait time – assessment is for learning).
14. Allow for mistakes – show how this is part of learning.
15. Repeating of key words/phrases.
16. Try not to talk too quickly.
17. Use of peer teaching to consolidate learning.
18. Allow short breaks between periods of work.
19. Find legitimate means of allowing certain pupils to move during the lesson without disturbing others.

Teaching Styles

Your own personal learning style will correlate strongly with your teaching style. When teaching something new and difficult, or when under pressure, teachers will often instinctively revert to their preferred style.

When there is a mismatch of learning styles of pupils and teaching styles there is a tendency toward underachievement, boredom and misbehaviour.

Good Practice

- Teachers should be aware of their preferred/dominant teaching style.
- Be aware of the range of learning styles within your classroom and try and match as best as possible.
- Schools cater best for visual and auditory learners – be aware that a third of your pupils will be kinesthetic and try and adapt lessons accordingly.
- By consciously providing variety and choice in learning activities that we employ in the classroom, we significantly increase the chances of ensuring that all pupils have regular opportunities to work in their preferred learning style.
- Teachers should allow pupils a choice of activities as often as possible to enable them to choose one that matches their preferred learning style.
- All pupils will do the same exam, however they can consolidate their learning in different ways.
- Encourage pupils to learn more about their own learning style. Activities are available in the Assessment is for Learning programme.

Recommendation

Use a variety of teaching approaches in lessons as often as possible to take account of the range of learning styles within your classroom.

Refer to the above examples on a regular basis to help improve the quality of learning and teaching within your class.

Pupils will only really be effective lifelong learners if they develop an awareness of how they learn best. Teachers and pupils alike should think about what this means for them in learning and teaching.

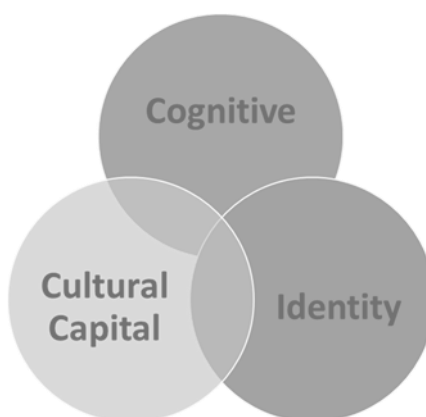
Use Career Long Professional Learning to improve learning and teaching within your classroom.

The Three Domain Model

The Three Domain Model is used across primary schools in Renfrewshire. It outlines three different, but interconnected, domains of professional knowledge and factors that teachers need to consider. The following is adapted from the Report on the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach August 2015 – July 2017 by Prof Sue Ellis, Jess Anderson & Adele Rowe.

To help teachers navigate themselves into position as ‘noticing teachers’, the University of Strathclyde developed a tool, known as the **‘Strathclyde Three-Domain Model’**. It outlines three different, but interconnected, domains of professional knowledge that teachers need. These are the child’s:

- **Cognitive skills** and knowledge about how to read, and how books work. ,
- **Cultural/social capital** and funds of knowledge about the world, and the purposes and practices of literacy outside school. (networks, funds of knowledge, resources, beliefs, purposes and experiences)
- **Identity as a learner** and a reader, including reading aspirations, preferences and networks.



Previous research showed the Strathclyde Three-Domain Model had the potential to help teachers think about curriculum provision in terms of the pupils and to re-conceptualise literacy teaching by:

- Making data about cultural capital and identity part of the explicit evidence-base that informs teaching decisions. ,
- Helping professionals consider how and why activities gain traction with particular classes or children. ,
- Identifying and articulating how to achieve pathways to impact. ,
- Helping children progress in school by harnessing the learning potential of their lives outwith school and creating supportive literacy learning environments in school.

The model is deliberately lightly-specified so that professionals navigate a range of evidence-streams and use their professional judgement to determine a productive ‘learning mix’. It acknowledges that some evidence-streams are harmonious, while others suggest conflicting or parallel courses of action. Professionals need to attend to all the evidence before choosing a course of action that will achieve the best payoff in the circumstances. This model provided the ‘anchor’ for professional learning and development in Renfrewshire’s primary schools, and a tool for thinking about curriculum provision.

In terms of secondary school literacy, research indicates that pupils need to move beyond the generic literacy behaviours taught in the primary sector and engage in subject-specific literacies that are required for their new subject-specific curriculum. Disciplinary Literacy research explores how each subject specialism uses literacy in a particular way: reading in chemistry, for example, requires pupils to adopt specific reading behaviours, understand specific vocabulary, use text structures that reflect the knowledge structure of the discipline and to learn the disciplinary norms of applying knowledge, argument and evidence that are particular to chemistry as a subject.

Reading in history involves Cognitive knowledge and skills for reading and writing Cultural and social capital, networks, funds of knowledge, resources, beliefs, purposes and experiences Identity and agency as a reader/writer and as a learner 16 different kinds of texts and vocabulary and requires a different pattern of reading behaviours, knowledge and thinking.

Teaching literacy in the secondary school is therefore less about taking general responsibility for teaching punctuation and spelling and more about preparing pupils for subject-specific reading demands. Being explicit about how pupils need to read, write and think in such subject-specific ways helps them to adopt appropriate 'literate' behaviours and provides a rubric for remembering the content knowledge. Such teaching is particularly beneficial to pupils from low literacy backgrounds.

Show My Homework

One of the biggest positive effects on young people's progress happens through the engagement of parents and carers in their child's learning (Goodall, 2017). One way in which we can support such engagement is through homework. Fuglei (2013) highlights that completing school work at home allows parents and carers to "interact with and understand the content their children are learning".

Pryor-Johnson (2012) outlines that completing homework promotes four key qualities in young people: **responsibility, time management, perseverance and self-esteem**. Although it is challenging to measure and assess such qualities in a formative or summative way, the four outlined above will undoubtedly benefit our pupils long after they leave Gleniffer High School.



In order to engage parents and carers in supporting their children to complete homework, in 2017 Gleniffer High School invested in 'Show My Homework'. This invaluable resource is designed to remove any barriers there may be for parents or carers in accessing and understanding what homework and assignments have been issued to their child.

Parents and carers have been issued with a step-by-step guide, which can be found on the school website. Furthermore, staff can find a guide on the school server: **X:\staff\Show My Homework**, to support them in using the variety of features that this software offers.



Learning Environment

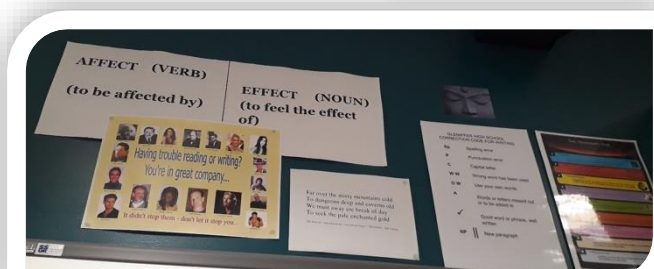
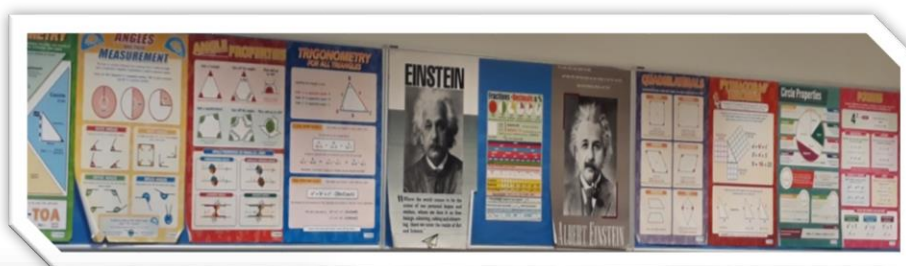
Detailed Findings

Pupil Involvement

The walk-round that influenced the following findings involved a group of pupils (10), ranging from S1 to S4. Pupils were instructed to make their way through the building, identifying examples of positive learning environments. Due to time constraints, we only managed to see the ground and first floor departments. This involved writing a description of positive elements in classrooms and corridors and taking photographic evidence to back up their ideas. The majority of pupils had very similar findings.

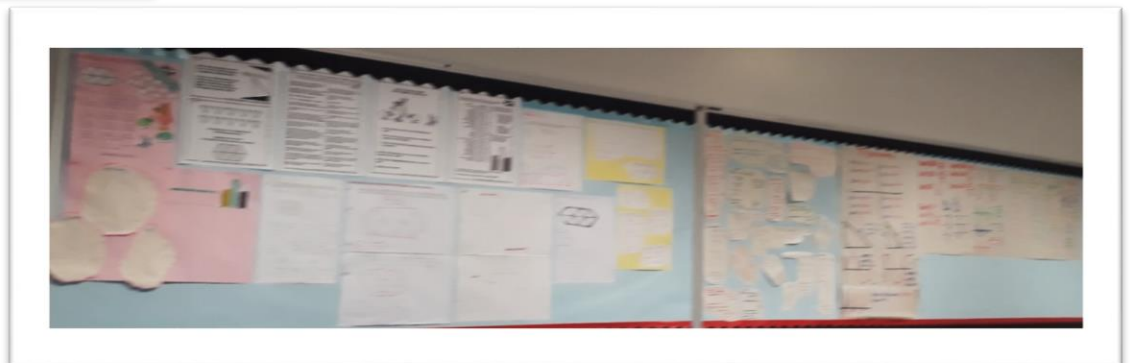
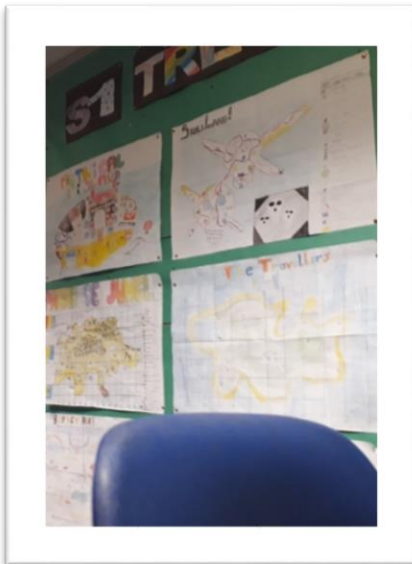
Wall Displays – Informative Posters

- Music Room G056 – The music family posters helped pupils learn.
- Maths Room F004 – School values, expectations etc. posters clearly displayed on walls. Other colourful and engaging wall displays relating to the subject.
- Maths Room F002 – Supportive anti-bullying wall (this could be used in different classrooms).
- English Room G006 – Posters about dyslexia were inspiring. The brick wallpaper used behind wall displays is eye-catching.
- English Room G003 – Wall display of musicals very interesting.
- English Room G004 – The poem wall helps to inspire pupils to write poems of a similar standard.
- English room G013 – The punctuation poster at the back is helpful. The world of literature is good because it shows where books were written and also helps to improve pupil's geography knowledge!
- The posters in the Modern Languages corridor show examples of famous people who can speak other languages. The pupils found this interesting.



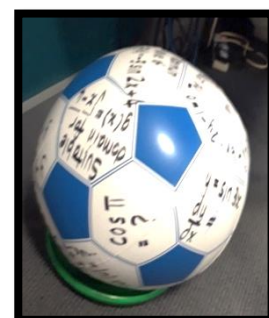
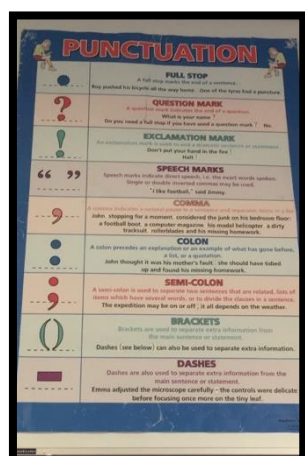
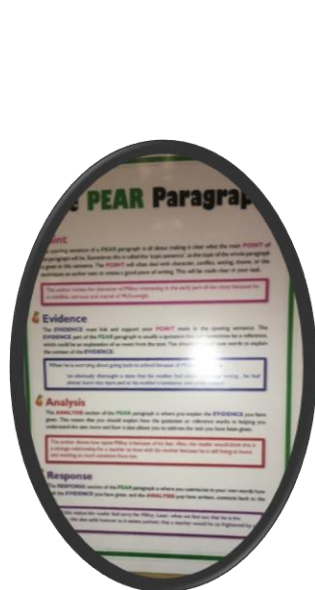
Wall Displays – Examples of Pupil Work

- The majority of English classrooms visited had good up to date examples of relevant pupil work on the walls.
- Maths room F015 – Pupils really liked the wall of past paper questions and answers completed by pupils.
- The majority of classrooms in Modern Languages and Social Subjects had fantastic examples of pupil work, such as the postcards on the wall in Modern Languages and the model landmarks in Social Subjects.



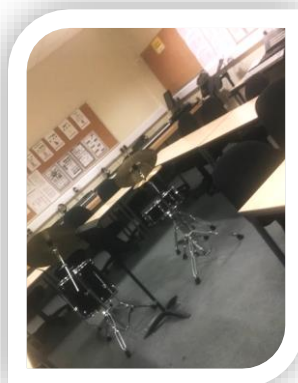
Learning Aids

- English room G001 – The pear paragraph on the back wall helps as a reminder of how to use the technique. The poetry tools poster also facilitates learning.
- English room G004 – The punctuation pyramid helps pupils learn at their desks and is especially good if they cannot see the wall displays from their seat.
- Maths base F009 – The matchsticks are useful to use when counting out. The geoboards are useful to work out area and perimeters.
- Science room F060 – The homework board is good as it reminds pupils of homework due without them having to check Show My Homework.
- Maths room F015 – Show Me Boards are an enjoyable way to learn. The pupils loved the inflatable footballs with questions written on them and thought this would be an enjoyable way to revise or recap a lesson.



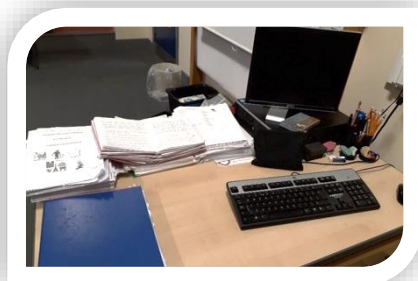
Seating Arrangements

- Music room G057 – The desks are laid out nicely in a U shape, allowing the teacher to stand in the middle in direct view of every pupil.
- Maths rooms F001 and F002 – The table layouts of two pupils per table mean pupils are less likely to be distracted during a lesson.
- English rooms G002 and G006 – tables in groups are very good for facilitating discussions.
- Science room F065 – The blue stools are comfier to sit on than the wooden stools with the hole in the centre.



Room Organisation

- Maths room F001 – The teacher's desk is very tidy.
- Maths room F004 – The shelves behind the teacher's desk and very organised and labelled well. Resources are in neat boxes.
- English room G003 – Folders very neat and easy to find. The classroom in general is very organised.
- Science room F060 – The resource boxes are clearly labelled and it is easy to find things in the cabinets as they are labelled.



Additional Features

- The SHANARRI poster in English room G001 helps pupils to remember the key points.
- Some of the classrooms visited had funny or inspirational quotes or pictures up on the wall – the pupils really liked these as they felt they encouraged them to do well or put them in a good mood.
- The pupils liked the QR codes for useful websites on the door of room F068 in Science.
- The pupils enjoyed being in classrooms that reflected the teacher's personality (such as family photographs, toys/models, photographs/quotes etc.) They particularly liked to see teachers keep items given to them by pupils (one maths teacher has a mug holder that was made by a pupil in the technical department).



Points to Consider

- Some classrooms had a lack of storage for learning materials such as textbooks and pupil jotters – Pupils felt this meant they were more likely to get damaged.
- Too much clutter in a classroom can be distracting, however the pupils also disliked very bare classrooms and felt these were “forgotten about”, meaning they were less likely to take ownership of the space whilst in the class.
- Some of the pupils commented on the handwriting on the whiteboards in classrooms – they felt a neater handwriting improved their learning as the information could be read very clearly.
- The pupils were mixed as to which seating arrangement they found worked best. For subjects where discussion with peers is important (such as English) they preferred group tables, but felt they concentrated more and had less distractions when seated in pairs.
- Almost all pupils commented on being able to find resources in a classroom. They felt key resources (such as additional paper, rulers, calculators, show me boards, etc.) should be organised neatly and labelled clearly for pupils to find without the teacher having to issue them out every time.
- All pupils agreed it was important to be facing the board or the teacher’s desk when they are seated.

Summary of Findings

Pupil Voice

A group of pupils ranging from S1 to S4 were involved in a walk-round of the school building in order to assess the spaces in which they learn. Pupils were given a feedback sheet and were informed to assess each classroom and note any constructive feedback they could give about the room. The findings below are based on the results of this walk-round, given by the pupils involved.

Wall Displays

Many of the classrooms visited made use of the wall space with a variety of different resources. Pupils particularly liked seeing examples of pupil work on the walls, although felt this had to be relevant to the curriculum and up to date. Pupils also really liked curricular posters that they could refer to when completing class work (for example: posters in maths that show how to carry out fractions etc.)

Other features pupils liked were inspirational quotes or images that captured their attention. They also agreed it was useful to have a homework display where the teacher could write up the task name and due date for each piece of homework as a reminder.

All pupils agreed that the walls in classrooms should have posters and pupil work displayed, as a bare classroom felt “forgotten about” and made them care less about the space. Although students appreciate the layout of a room can impact on teachers utilising wall displays, it was recognised that on occasion wall displays can get blocked by unnecessary boxes or paper stacks.

Learning Aids

Some departments had inventive resources to help learning which were really appreciated by the pupils involved. For example, the punctuation pyramids in English classrooms sit on pupil desks, allowing the pupils to use these when they require additional help. All pupils agreed that Show Me Boards were a fun, hands-on way to learn.

Seating Arrangements

Many of the classrooms visited during the walk-round had different seating styles. The pupils felt

that the best seating style depended on the class (for example: group tables are better in English to promote discussions; tables arranged in a U shape in music so each pupil can see the teacher demonstrating an instrument in the middle of the classroom; paired seating in maths so they can focus on their own work more easily). There was no clear winner in terms of seating arrangements, however all pupils agreed it was very important that they were able to see the teacher and the board from their seat.

Additional Points to Consider

The pupils really liked neat, organised classrooms; especially if they were able to find resources such as paper or stationery themselves without asking the teacher. Some of the pupils noted how much they liked using the QR codes in the Science department to access useful websites to help them revise.

References

Fuglei, M. (2013). *How Homework Benefits Students*. [online] Concordia University-Portland. Available at: <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/classroom-resources/the-homework-debate-benefits-of-homework/> [Accessed 23 Feb. 2019].

Goodall, J. (2017). *Narrowing the Achievement Gap*. 1st ed. London: Routledge.

Pryor-Johnson, G. (2012). *Why Homework Is Actually Good For Kids*. [online] Memphis Parent - Memphis, TN. Available at: <http://memphisparent.com/education/why-homework-is-actually-good-for-kids/> [Accessed 23 Feb. 2019].

Useful Websites

www.acceleratedlearning.com

www.idpride.net/learningstyles

www.campaign-for-learning.org/aboutyourlearning

www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/i/sweb.html

www.berghuis.co.nz/alistair/lsi/lsiframe.html

www.networkpress.co.uk/isa/index/html

www.2.mcsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/iLSdir/ilsweb.html

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/HGIOS4>