

Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

To: Renfrewshire Joint Negotiating Committee for Teachers

On: 05 February 2019

**Report by
Head of Schools**

Review of Policy Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluating the Learning and Teaching Experience (MELE)

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Monitoring and Evaluating the Learning and Teaching Experience (MELE) policy guidelines were introduced to schools in April 2005. These were reviewed in September to December 2018 by a working group comprising teaching staff, promoted teaching staff and peripatetic teaching staff from across primary and secondary sectors and teacher union representatives. The reviewed guidance, Sharing Good Practice through the Evaluation of Learning Experiences (attached as Appendix 1) replaces the existing MELE policy guidelines.
- 1.2. Documentation to support the guidance is attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.3. Through the Quality Improvement Framework, the local authority will ensure that this policy is being followed by all schools and that activities which evaluate learners' experiences lead to improvements in service.

2. Background

- 2.1. A key duty of the authority is to assure the quality of the learning that happens in our schools and establishments. Part of this duty is to support schools through robust self-evaluation of their practice and to share identified good practice as part of the agenda for improvement. This expectation, that robust self-evaluation will be in place, is reflected in the HMIE inspection model and is reported publicly in inspection reports. Increased empowerment and accountability for schools means that they need to know the quality of pupils' learning experiences within their school. It is their very core business and there is a moral and professional imperative that they know and share with those involved, how well schools and the authority support and develop learning.

- 2.2. This expectation, that robust self-evaluation will be in place, is reflected in the HMle inspection model and is reported publicly in inspection reports. Increased empowerment and accountability for schools means that they need to know the quality of pupil's learning experiences within their school. The guidance clearly distinguishes between the evaluation process and any kind of direct assessment of teacher performance. It is recognised and reinforced that any such issues and concerns should be addressed by other processes. This guidance is key to how well schools and the authority support and develop learning and there is a professional imperative that identified good pedagogical practice is disseminated within each school.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that JNC approves the revised guidance and associated support materials in appendix 1 and 2 of this report.

**Sharing Good Practice through the
Evaluation of
Learning Experiences**



**Policy Guidelines for Schools
in Renfrewshire**

December 2018

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1. Introduction and Rationale

Increasing responsibility and empowerment devolved to schools, carries with it an increasing accountability for assuring the quality of the provision made. For this reason, there needs to be a collegiate approach to monitoring and evaluation, which involves all staff. Schools will utilise varying approaches to evaluating pupil's learning experiences, however, this policy will be useful in ensuring that a basic set of common principles underpin approaches.

This guidance describes the processes which will be used to evaluate the learning experiences of young people in our schools. Renfrewshire establishments undertake ongoing self-evaluation, which is part of the process of continuous improvement. They use a variety of means to develop, plan and deliver high quality learning and teaching. These include: self-evaluation against HMLe indicators within 'How Good is Our School 4' (HGIOS) and 'How Good is our Early Learning and Child Care' (HGIELC) frameworks; the use of performance data; development planning and reporting; standards and quality reports; staff professional learning and strategies for continuous improvement.

Collaborative approaches to seek out and share good practice are a key component in the drive to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap. This should involve leaders at all levels in a supportive, collegiate and reflective process within each establishment and beyond. This process is focussed on high quality learning and teaching, specifically the learning experiences of pupils.

The purpose of the evaluation process is to endorse and share good practice as well as help to develop the agenda for improvement. It is essential within this context, that staff at any level, can sample and evaluate the learning experiences of all young people in their charge. It is essential too, that all staff have the opportunity to be involved in this process. This will require all staff to be actively involved in developing and implementing the evaluation process for learners' experiences.

This process is specifically about the learning experiences of pupils. It is not about the competence or capability of individual teachers. Should this issue arise, it should be dealt with separately within the school. This policy guidance clarifies the **classroom observation** element of a school's monitoring procedures.

Central to the process is professional trust and a focus on pedagogical practice to achieve continuous improvement in learning and teaching.

2. The Processes

Agreeing the purpose of the evaluation of the learning experience with all staff, in terms of what is being looked for, is essential at the outset. Agreeing the best way of evaluating any activity and ensuring staff understanding of what is being looked for, must be shared with all those involved in the process. Existing tools, such as HGIOS 4 or HGIELCC, as well as the targets an establishment sets itself within its improvement plan, are also essential in informing the process.

Essentially there are key ways in which evaluation of the learning experience can take place: observation; discussion; documentation and using data. For staff to be meaningfully involved in the evaluation, there must be a shared understanding of the ways that these approaches will work. Staff who are clear about what is being looked for, and how any approach will support this, will not only assist in the process but will be able to add value to it themselves.

2.1 Evaluating learning in the classroom and beyond

The evaluation process will be undertaken within current workload agreements.

The process of evaluating the learning experience of young people in classrooms and other contexts will require involvement with identified classes or groups of learners. The focus of the visits will be shared, and the specific approach will be agreed from the outset. Observing what happens in the classroom or playroom is essential to understanding many of the establishment's activities. From provision of resources, to ethos and behaviour as well as support for staff through professional development, will all be improved through classroom and playroom visits. The outcomes of evaluation should lead to endorsement, discussion and dissemination of good practice, support and encouragement for staff, and be a positive experience for all involved. It is essential to evaluate learning that happens elsewhere in the school and beyond when this is a structured learning experience for pupils e.g. outdoor learning, field trips, vertical learning experiences etc.

The process should be welcomed and agreed by all staff as a way of sharing good practice in pupils' learning experiences with others in a collegiate atmosphere. The process may involve learning walks, planned observations with the management team, learning trios, peer observations etc, some of which may involve pupils. The duration of these activities will vary. Planned observations may not involve the observer staying with the pupils for a full lesson.

Basic principles of the process will ensure that:

- Staff will be a part of the evaluation – it is done 'with' and not 'to' the member of staff
- The purpose and arrangements for the exercise are shared and agreed – including with pupils where appropriate
- Involvement in the learning experience being evaluated is planned and as much part of normal practice as possible
- Pupils can be made aware of the purpose of the evaluation
- Dialogue can be undertaken during the evaluation to help gain insight into the learning experience being observed
- When formats for recording evaluation are required, these should be known, agreed and shared before any visits or involvement – see suggested format in Appendix 1
- The nature and use of the record of the evaluation will be known by all involved e.g. to disseminate good practice

- When reviewing whole school practice, records should not identify individual staff. The outcome of evaluating the learning experience should be used to inform overall establishment evaluation
- Learning visits should, wherever possible, not interfere with the usual pattern of learning and teaching - except where the additional person visiting, adds to the support for the lesson.
- The visit is not a 'crit' lesson and is focussed on the learning experience of the children or young people.

Classroom or playroom involvement, or evaluation of any other structured learning context, should contribute to the overall understanding of learner's experiences within an establishment. This will provide an ongoing insight into the challenges and issues which face all staff in their day-to-day practice.

2.2 Professional Dialogue & Documentation

Key to any successful monitoring and evaluation process is the opportunity for staff to engage in professional dialogue about the business they are engaged in. Time for professional dialogue should be planned with staff to provide a collegiate context for them to have open discussion on issues which affect the school. This is a valuable process which will allow the management of the school to listen to the views of staff which are related to significant issues of learning and teaching and which can be related to improvement planning.

It is useful too, to create opportunities for discussion with staff other than teachers, and with pupils and parents who will also have views to express.

When managers are involved in classroom visits, or reviewing learning out-with the classroom, it is essential that professional dialogue takes place to allow all staff the opportunity to give their views on the evaluation of the learning experience.

Schools may wish to use a variety of previously agreed types of documentation when evaluating pupil's learning experiences – a couple of simple examples are included in the Appendix which accompanies this policy.

All staff should be confident that dialogue & documentation used to support evaluation of the learning experience:

- is part of a whole school approach
- will generate an overall response on issues which can be linked to whole school planning
- can generate support through staff professional development, review of resources or the development of new approaches to existing practice
- when formats for recording evaluation are required, these should be known, agreed and shared before any visits or involvement. These should avoid the use of a 'tick list' approach
- will be useful in endorsing and sharing good practice

- reflect a positive approach to evaluation

Professional dialogue & documentation are a valuable part of the evaluation process which give all staff the opportunity to have their views expressed and noted. This process would be within the programme of planned monitoring and evaluation within the school.

3. The Outcomes

The purpose of evaluating the learning experience is to highlight and disseminate good practice. Schools should be able to demonstrate a positive impact as a result of engaging in this process. Improvement planning is central to this and support for staff through staff training, good practice visits, continued professional learning, additional resources or changes to pedagogy are a few of the possible routes to further development.

The process of evaluating the learning experiences of pupils is worthwhile only if the school itself learns from the activity. All staff need to be involved in planning improvements. Schools may involve all staff by ensuring this is an item on staff meeting agendas, departmental agendas or a focus for discussion during an Inservice day etc. This is a collaborative process to empower teachers and provide a real sense of professionalism and ownership, as well as taking forward pedagogical practices which might arise from the evaluation, to enhance the learners' experiences.

4. Reviewing the monitoring and evaluation process itself

As with any development, this evaluation process requires to be reviewed to ensure that it still meets the needs as intended. As schools continue to develop their approaches to sharing good practice and as staff develop further in confidence with the evaluation of learning, so the process will continue to improve. The range of good practice within Renfrewshire schools and establishments will support this process which simply describes the approaches that have to be taken to ensure full involvement of all staff, clear procedures and a shared understanding of the purpose of the process.

Through the local authority Quality Improvement Framework, education managers will discuss with school leadership teams how pupil's learning experiences are being evaluated and how this information is used by schools to secure improvement. In this way, the local authority will ensure that this policy is being followed by all schools and that activities which evaluate learner's experiences lead to improvements in service.

Evaluation of the Learning Experience: Discussion Notes

Date:

Subject:

Level (BGE/Senior Phase):

Part of lesson observed (circle which apply): start / middle / end / all

Agreed Focus:

Observed good practice - discussion notes:

How this practice will be taken forward and shared with colleagues:

Evaluation of the Learning Experience: Potential areas for an observation focus

Features	Purpose	Methodology	Learner Experience	Meeting needs of all learners	Assessment (how learning will be recognised)	Developing key skills
Examples	Sharing learning outcomes (written or verbal) links to prior learning lesson set in context success criteria	Individual tasks Co-operative learning Tasks Pace Timing Structure	Relationships Interactions Pupil Participation Demonstrating responsibility Behaviour Engagement	Challenge Support Differentiation Resources (equipment/ ICT/ pupils/ external/ texts/ Materials)	AifL strategies Observation Effective questioning Formative and summative assessment Homework Show-me boards Starters and plenaries Feedback Self and peer assessment	Literacy Numeracy Health and Wellbeing Employability skills Problem-solving/ transferable skills
GTCS Standard For Registration	2.1 Curriculum 3.1 Teaching and Learning	2.1 Curriculum 2.3 Pedagogical Theories and Practice 3.1 Teaching and Learning 3.2 Classroom Organisation and Management	2.2 Education Systems and Professional Responsibilities 3.1 Teaching and Learning 3.2 Classroom Organisation and Management	2.1 Curriculum 2.3 Pedagogical Theories and Practice 3.1 Teaching and Learning 3.2 Classroom Organisation and Management	2.1 Curriculum 3.1 Teaching and Learning 3.3 Pupil Assessment	2.1 Curriculum 2.2 Education Systems and Professional Responsibilities 3.1 Teaching and Learning
GTCS Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning	(i) Pedagogy, Learning and Subject Knowledge	(i) Pedagogy, Learning and Subject Knowledge	(i) Pedagogy, Learning and Subject Knowledge (iv) Educational contexts/current debates	(i) Pedagogy, Learning and Subject Knowledge (ii) Curriculum and Assessment	(i) Pedagogy, Learning and Subject Knowledge (ii) Curriculum and Assessment	(ii) Curriculum and Assessment (vi) Learning for sustainability