

Learning Walks: Tools and templates for getting started

This booklet gives you some tools and templates that you can use to help you plan and conduct your Learning Walks.

The templates are designed to give you ideas and frameworks for planning your walk, collecting data during the walk and reflecting on what your walk has taught your walkers about the school.

When you are planning your walk you will need to agree protocols with the staff from the school where you are walking and with the walkers. Part of this agreement will be about the tools and forms that you use. You can use the frameworks in this guide as a basis for these discussions but your walk will be more successful if you adapt them to suit your context, your schools and your staff.

There are some questions your school will need to consider BEFORE you walk. We have learnt that paying attention to these questions as part of the planning of the walk will help your Learning Walks to be a successful and useful learning experience for all those involved.

- What will you have to do to get leaders on board and active?
- Who will participate and why?
- In what Continuing Professional Development (CPD) have teachers participated? What was its focus and what were the specific outcomes?
- How will you select the classrooms to visit?
- What are the timing and resource implications (before, during and after the walk)?
- How will teachers be notified?
- How will teachers be involved?
- What will be the focus for the enquiry?

- What is the role of pupils, and how can they effectively be involved?
- How and when will you feedback the data collected to the staff who have been visited?

Finding a focus for your walk

What is our pupil learning focus?
Which aspect of this are we hoping to investigate with our Learning Walk? (year group/subject/principle/behaviours)
What CPD have our staff been part of that we would expect to help them with the pupil learning focus?

What are the changes we would expect to see in classrooms as a result of the CPD? What will our work around the pupil learning focus actually look like?
What will we see?
On displays
In classroom organisation
In books and work
In classroom management and behaviour
What will we hear?
When we talk to children
When we talk to teachers
When we observe a whole class

Capturing data

You will need to agree a way of capturing the data each of your walkers collects. Here is an example of a data-capture sheet that one school used when investigating their pupil learning focus.

Pupil learning focus: developing independent learning through a Critical Skills approach.

Recording sheet for the Learning Walk.

(Use phrases such as: I noticed... I saw... I heard...)

The walls support learning...
Discussions with pupils: What are you learning? How do you feel about this work? What are you good at?
Help is given to individual pupils...
Use of praise: What did you see and hear?
Discussion with teacher: How are pupils supported in becoming successful learners?
What questions did you hear?

Reflecting on the walk

You will need to provide your walkers with a way of reflecting on all their observations and a way of finding common threads, issues or questions. This is done as the walkers progress round the school in the corridor debrief and during the final debrief discussions. The lead walker takes responsibility for making sure that the observations are evidence based and for leading the final debrief.

We have learnt that schools find it useful to provide a framework for individuals to make sense of their observations before they begin the debrief discussion.

This framework was developed by one school. Each walker took between five and ten minutes to reflect on the walk and to collate their observations before the final debrief. As well as allowing the walkers to make their own sense of the walk it also provides valuable written observations for the lead walker.

Look through your observation sheets and review your notes:
I have learnt...
Make a list of the evidence of teaching and learning you observed during the walk
Any questions for the headteacher or teachers?
Next steps

Feeding back to staff

It is very important for the staff involved to have the opportunity to hear feedback as soon as possible after the walk.

Experience has shown us that this is best done through a meeting rather than by writing.

When you agree your protocols for the walk you will also need to agree protocols for feeding back to staff. This is vital if the Learning Walk is to be seen as a real learning opportunity and not an external observation or monitoring exercise.

Your school will need to consider some or all of the following questions.

- What information will be fed back to the staff?
- When will it happen?
- Where will it happen?
- Will it be as a whole group or individually ?
- How will the observation evidence be shared with the headteacher?
- How will the observation evidence be shared with the staff?
- How will next steps be identified with the staff?
- How will the whole staff access the data that has been generated?
- Who is responsible for planning the next walk?
- What is the next learning opportunity for staff?
- How will you decide the focus for the next walk?
- How will you celebrate achievement?
- How will your school provide an overview of the next steps, including a description of learning opportunities for staff?