

# Case Study

## Durdan's Park Primary School

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3 - 11 Primary & Nursery School

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### The issue

Durdan's Park Primary School embarked on the implementation of the Visible Learning Programme in September 2015. Prior to this a baseline capability assessment was conducted in July 2015.

The school had been improving over previous years with Teaching and Learning being consistently good. However, monitoring and subsequent evaluation by other Senior Leadership identified a lack of a consistent approach to Teaching and Learning. There were individual pockets of good practice however, these were not always shared. Standards and outcomes were improving for the children, however, it was clear that our pupils were very passive learners. They did not necessarily question themselves or the teaching and few looked to challenge themselves or own their learning.

The senior leadership team (SLT) concluded that the school had reached a plateau and to improve the Teaching and Learning experience for all, it needed a vehicle or framework to explore, harness and develop best practice for both pupils' learning and teachers' teaching.

### Analysis of the issue

The initial Capability Assessment in July 2015 identified that aspiration for learners and teachers was good but not common place or systematic. This was repeated for professional practices which aligned with the findings of previous monitoring conducted by the SLT. It was evident that there was a lack of shared understanding of what constituted good teaching and learning as well as an inconsistent approach to systematically embedding best practice. In summary, we were a good educational organisation operating in isolation in many cases.

In light of this assessment the school carried out a thorough audit over the whole Autumn Term 2015. No actions were taken until this was complete and outcomes evaluated.

The evidence gathering tools were used for each strand. The Visible Learner, Inspired and Passionate Teachers, Know Thy

Impact and Effective Feedback as well as the matrix to audit our school systems and processes. Different groups within the school took on the responsibility of auditing, gathering evidence and evaluating outcomes. All teachers were involved and took ownership of their practice and children's learning.

This process enabled the school to draw the following conclusion:

- 1) What strengths and practices worked well;
- 2) What was shared and what was not.

The most stark outcome of the evidence gathering, was that a culture of assumption by teachers was generic, rather than evaluation and reflection of pupil learning. We called this 'Perceptions Versus Reality – How do we know?'. The assumption was that the Learning Objective was given with the Success Criteria, therefore, children knew and understood them. The lesson was taught and the assumption made that learning towards the Learning Objective had taken place.

The reality was very different! Our evidence indicated that pupils were often confused about what they were learning as well as the difference between success criteria, targets and goals.

There existed a lack of understanding that the Success Criteria was related to achieving the Learning Objective. Finally, the biggest revelation was that, even if pupils were clear about the Success Criteria they did not know how to use them to know if they had achieved the Learning Objective.

In conclusion there was a lack of:

- 1) Shared understanding of Teaching and Learning by pupils and teachers. Pupils were not able to talk confidently about their learning, what and how they had learnt.
- 2) Shared language.
- 3) Consistent, effective approaches to Teaching and Learning.

## Development of the plan

Durdan's Park Primary School knew that good practice existed and wanted to promote this and build upon our strengths. This was integral to the action plan devised to improve our Teaching and Learning. It was very important to ensure all members of the teaching staff were part of this improvement plan.

The school focused on two strands from Visible Learning: The Visible Learner and Inspired and Passionate Teachers. We wanted our pupils to be active in their learning; to be able to articulate their thoughts and feelings; take more ownership and have ambition. In particular, the plan focussed on the Assessment Capable Learner (ACL). By taking these two core strands as our framework for development, we knew that we would address other strands and elements of Visible Learning.

The overarching aim was for:

- Teachers to have high clarity about children's learning and progress.
- Teachers to be instructional and not make assumptions.
- Teachers being activators not facilitators. Children to be more involved in their own assessment and next steps in order to have more ownership over their learning and progress.

This approach meant that the two most important elements in learning were at the forefront of all development. Their profile and importance raised with their own value recognised - The learner and the teacher.

## Implementation of the plan

To ensure buy in and ownership at all levels, the school set up a large working party. The membership of this included the Head Teacher, Impact Coaches and at least one teacher from each year group (if an Impact Coach was not present). The group were tasked with implementing the plan by trialling ideas and practice, evaluating the success or not of actions. Following the trials, it was the responsibility of members to promote successful, effective actions and practice with teaching colleagues within year groups and phases. Best successful practice were then promoted formally through INSET with the expectation of review and evaluation in strict timeframes. Finally, actions and practice that were effective would then be made school procedure with an expectation that these practices were to be implemented by all consistently.

The first two important actions taken were to establish:

- A shared definition of an effective learner at our school;
- Developing a shared language of learning across the school.

The first point involved clear dialogue and feedback with children and adults which resulted in clear learning attributes and disposition established, explored and understood by all. These in turn underpin the school's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. Learning talk always refers to these dispositions.

The second point resulted in clear defined language, used and understood, related to Learning Objectives, Success Criteria, self-assessment tools, targets and goals. The action taken by all teachers was to systematically teach what all these elements were, how to use them and how they related to each other. The key message was: DO NOT ASSUME IT IS KNOWN OR HOW TO USE, MODEL AND DEMONSTRATE.

Underpinning these elements were 3 key questions:

- Where am I going?
- How am I doing?
- Where to next?

The next action taken was to establish effective feedback practices for teachers from students. We aimed to develop high levels of relational trust so pupils felt empowered to give feedback on what helps them or not from teachers teaching, assessing and providing feedback.

This action was taken alongside teachers examining effective and useful marking and feedback for students from teachers.

The outcome of these actions highlighted that next step marking was an implementation that was often of little use, rather than being judicious and incisive. Pupils were taught to self and peer assess against success criteria and learning steps, rather than a superficial exercise or latest educational fad to use.

All of the above enabled pupils to be more Assessment Capable. Teachers had an accurate knowledge and understanding of their pupil's needs and abilities. This in turn led to pupils being taught how to use their own gap analysis of assessments and tests to inform their learning strengths and next steps. This in turn is used in partnership with the teacher to shape the best learning strategies to take for individual, groups or whole class.

Children were then more motivated by assessments and tests to measure their own achievement and progress. Feedback from pupils viewed tests as something that gave them anxiety, taken away from them and then told how good or bad they were!

## Evaluation

Practice was embedded across the school by being:

- A school priority in School Development Plan.
- Working party members leading priorities.
- A Performance Management target to demonstrate being IPT.
- Being part of the monitoring cycle focussing on:
  - o Work scrutiny
  - o Lesson observations – looking at shared language, modelling, demonstration of Learning Objectives, Success Criteria and use of resources.
  - o Pupil interviews
  - o Triangulated feedback with teacher, peer observers.
  - o Elements of ACL/IPT and how these related to Outstanding Teaching and Learning.
- The principle was to empower teachers to experiment, trial and evaluate.
- Take control, be active and instructional, develop and implement.

Is there evidence that developing a Visible Learning approach has been successful?

Visible Learning is firmly embedded in the Teaching and Learning practices and processes of the school. The follow up Capability Assessment carried out in June 2017 indicated that all areas in each strand has improved to common place or systematically embedded in the school. The most emphatic improvements are in the Visible Learner Strand where aspirations and shared understanding are fully embedded.

Pupils are now very articulate about their learning, how they learn and what is effective. Professional dialogue between teachers focuses on effective learning and the use of assessment. Pupils know 'where they are going,' how they are doing' and 'where to next.' They measure their own impact using standardised tests from time 1 to time 2. This is empowering and motivating for them to physically see progress based on their own challenge.

Teachers are clear about the terminology and use of learning tools including success criteria. Modelling and demonstration is of a high quality and teaching is never less than good.

In summary, Teaching and Learning is most effective when:

- There is a clear structure to the lesson that is sequential and incremental. The teachers know the children's abilities and needs and suitably match challenge and expectation.
- Teacher modelling includes how to use Success Criteria often demonstrated through the use of WAGOLL or an

example.

- Learning sequences are planned to give children the knowledge, skills and application necessary to meet the learning objective.
- The use of assessment by both teacher and pupil is accurate and constant. This enables the teachers to provide support, intervention and challenge at the right time for the pupil.
- The use of different types of feedback is dependent on the needs and ability of the child. The teacher immediately identifies if this should be Task, Process or Self-Regulated.
- Peer and self-assessment is accurate and meaningful because teacher subject knowledge is strong and how to assess is taught clearly to the child.

Teacher retention is high and new teachers join the school because they wish to have the professional development of practice that is highly effective in the school. They want to be part of any organisation that is reflective and evaluative; a school that embraces what works and moves on from what doesn't.

Early Years GLD	2015	2016	2017
	59%	60%	68%

Brackets = National

KS1	2016 Reading Exp+ 71% (74%)	Reading GDS 31% (24%)	2017 Reading Exp+ 75% (76%)	Reading GDS 33% (25%)
KS1	2016 Writing Exp+ 61%(65%)	Writing GDS 19% (13%)	2017 Writing Exp+ 77% (68%)	Writing GDS 28% (16%)
KS1	2016 Maths Exp+ 71% (73%)	Maths GDS 14% (18%)	2017 Maths Exp+ 75% (75%)	Maths GDS 26%(21%)
KS1	2016 RWM Exp+ 56% (60%)	RWM GDS 14% (9%)	2017 RWM Exp+ 70% (64%)	RWMGDS 20% (11%)
KS2	2016 Reading Exp+ 61% (66%)	Reading GDS 10% (19%)	2017 Reading Exp+ 67% (72%)	Reading GDS 21% (25%)
KS2	2016 Writing Exp+ 73% (74%)	Writing GDS 27% (15%)	2017 Writing Exp+ 81% (79%)	Writing GDS 21% (18%)
KS2	2016 Maths Exp+ 86% (70%)	Maths GDS 25% (17%)	2017 Maths Exp+ 90% (75%)	MathsGDS 55% (23%)
KS2	2016 RWM Exp+ 51%(53%)	RWM GDS 8%(5%)	2017 RWM Exp+ 66%(61%)	RWMGDS 16%(9%)

Boys Impact over 2 years was impressive.

KS1	2016 Reading Exp 63% (70%)	GDS 17% (20%)	2017 Reading Exp 76% (71%)	GDS 29% (22%)
KS1	2016 Writing Exp 43% (59%)	GDS 7% (10%)	2017 Writing Exp 78% (62%)	GDS 24% (11%)
KS1	2016 Maths Exp 67% (72%)	GDS 7% (20%)	2017 Maths Exp 78% (74%)	GDS 29% (22%)K

KS2	2016 Reading Exp 45% (62%)	GDS 3% (16%)	2017 Reading Exp 65% (68%)	GDS 26% (21%)
KS2	2016 Writing Exp 52% (68%)	GDS 14%(11%)	2017 Writing Exp 77% (70%)	GDS 23% (13%)
KS2	2016 Maths Exp 90% (70%)	GDS 14% (18%)	2017 Maths Exp 87% (74%)	GDS 55% (24%)

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### Where to next?

The next stage for the school is to consolidate the improvements in practice and effective learning to ensure consistency. Building on this, the school is developing its teaching and learning of the curriculum, including the wider curriculum to move learning from surface, to deeper, analytical and critical.

The Solo Taxonomy framework of One, Many, Relate and Extend is the basis to develop thought and learning processes. Due to our previous work, learners and teachers are now in a good position to do this.

SOLO is used as the framework of surface to deep, one to many, relate and compare. Using topics and themes we are identifying and developing processes of local, national and global focuses. Referring and promoting analytical thought around moral and ethical dilemmas. Where possible we use the thread of British Values, especially democracy, rule of law and individual liberty. The school has already developed a

richer, deeper thinking curriculum provision that harnesses and promotes meta cognition. The school will review, refine and build upon this development next year using our skills of the Visible Learning by assessing, evaluating and questioning our progress and practice to ask: