

Always learning

I've never met a great teacher who is not also - and simultaneously - a great learner. This applies equally to all professionals whose privilege is to work alongside our pupils.

The learning manifests itself in myriad ways: we learn from experts, books, videos and websites, from one another, from the pupils we teach and their carers. For some it's reading that does the trick, others relish the chance to watch other professionals at work. There are books, courses, conferences and coaches. And many profess to be liberated by the power of social media to connect us more widely to a global educational movement. Some of the learning enables us to impact more meaningfully on single child. Other learning has wider currency. Sometimes we engage with a learning opportunity that has the potentials to transform our whole professional lives. For most people it's more mundane - although quietly important - and our professional learning simply helps us to do a tough job better. It connects us and validates our work.

Across the Trust, professional learning is valued highly. In our schools, it's not enough to have access to professional development. Rather it's seen as mandatory and it needs to be routinised. While this costs, it's not merely about committing resource. We have to plan development that makes a difference and unsurprisingly there's a wealth of research around to help us to do this. Possibly, the most influential UK based study was completed by my former colleague Philippa Cordingley in the mid noughties. Philippa highlights several key ideas that influence the design of our professional development programme. Philippa argues that great CPD should be geared towards "empowering teachers, not scaring them into a single way of teaching". The most productive learning experiences for school based professionals are those that utilise external expertise that is closely matched to what colleagues want and need to learn. This is usually school specific but where we can we find ways to bring people together this always adds value and is always worthwhile.

A detailed report on this research is worth a read. It can be found at http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/CPD_rv1.pdf?ver=2006-02-27-231004-323

Enriching the curriculum

All schools across the Trust have - rightly - focused huge effort and energy into curriculum design. Next year will see a continuation of this. Carole Rhodes - Principal at Endeavour Academy in Hyde - is pleased with progress the whole staff team is making. "We have reviewed our principles and determining what pupils are to learn during their time at each academy. Leaders are setting out what approaches to implementation are taken and how these mesh with any signature pedagogies that are evolving."

This is crucial and important work. But there's another side of the curriculum that needs thinking about as well. The Enquire Learning Trust academies offer a broad range of enrichment opportunities to pupils. From outdoor adventures to artistic excellence, farming to football, conservation to cricket, every day in an Enquire Learning Trust school sees staff create amazing learning that complements what happens in classrooms. In many cases the offer taps into the passions and enthusiasm of staff and community members. If you're looking to extend your offer look at our academies' social media output (especially Twitter). If you're not digitally engaged inspiration can be found in Flowery Field's ground breaking farm, Yarm's well planned sequence of residential visits, Elliston's vast array of community engagement opportunities, Moorside's sporting success and Easterside's allotment. And I won't even mention Forest Schools which will have a feature of their own in the next issue.

Alvin Fell, Principal at Flowery Field sums up the approach at Flowery Field, "The curriculum needs to create opportunities for pupils to find their talents and excel."

Leading mathematics

Across the Trust we benefit from colleagues who have consciously built their expertise in key areas of work so that they can enhance provision in their own school and be a source of advice and encouragement to all of us. At Harrow Gate, Chris Story made it his business to develop his skills as a leader in Mathematics, through engaging with research, speaking and working with great teachers, seeking out authoritative voices from across the UK and beyond and - crucially - diligently applying his learning in practice.

Chris is ambitious learners. He opines, "The content of each lesson has to be pitched right. It should build on prior learning and new learning should be acquired for all pupils. There should be the opportunity for every child to learn at greater depth." He adds, "Successful learning over the course of a lesson should prepare all children to try a greater depth challenge."

And he's clear that when it works well it's about altering pupils' perceptions of themselves as learners. Chris suggests that effective teaching in mathematics allows pupils to "think mathematically and be mathematicians."

Mathematics leaders have a crucial role. Chris offers great advice for these key people; Be that beacon of good practice - model the quality. In your own room, and/or across the whole school.

- Read - books, blogs, tweets - and encourage others to do so and take responsibility for their own development.
- Ensure there are plenty of concrete apparatus in every room. The 'in' and the 'every' are really important there. They need to be in rooms (not stored centrally) and easily accessible for children so that they can be used all of the time, and without direct teacher instruction.
- Engage with high quality CPD - the maths hubs have been transformative for us.
- Collaborate across the trust - there is a real shared vision and understanding of effective maths teaching across the whole trust.
- Ensure maths is seen as fun and exciting - but not with gimmicks. The best way to do this is to make it challenging!

Chris gently reminds us that, "We are a challenge-seeking species and children will love maths if they are given a real challenge that they have to work hard to achieve. Maths is interesting in its own right!"



Learn.

The news sheet of the Enquire Learning Trust

Summer 2019 third edition - edited by

Darren Holmes

1

ICT leadership

Imagine the scene: it's Ofsted day 2. You've got a great lesson planned that builds on what happened yesterday, will challenge and interest pupils in equal measure and ensure that the progress they are making is consolidated and their knowledge applied. Everything is prepared. The children are eager. And, yes, there's an inspector at the back of the room. Confidently, you click on the Interactive Whiteboard that's projecting a screen from the web based resource that you've hung your hat on. Nothing happens.

Usually, the issue is the kit we have available in school. It's expensive and continual investment in infrastructure, hardware, software is necessary. We also need to keep our skills up to date so we can incorporate technology into learning in ways that truly make a difference. Brett Webster leads the development of ICT across the Trust. "I'm working with Principals, ICT leaders, teachers and other professionals within our academies to make sure we all have access to ICT we can rely on whether we're working at school or elsewhere." His work is underpinned by an approach that secures regular refreshment of each school's ICT capability and seeks to ensure children have access to quality learning experiences that can be relied upon.

This development goes hand in glove with the work of the ICT leaders' group who are working together to ensure all learners have access to a computing curriculum that meets every child's minimum learning entitlement. The Trust will be creating an approach that sets out sequence of learning that satisfied the demands of the National Curriculum which can then be adapted by each academy so it dovetails neatly with other subjects and themes.

EAL at Endeavour Academy

Endeavour Academy in Hyde serves a diverse community. Many learners enter the school with no English and often pupils are not yet secure in home language. They arrive from around the globe and a swift scan across the school roll reveals pupils from across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Carol Rhodes is the Principal at Endeavour and she is clear that, "For some pupils, an understanding of English is but another challenge: we work with children who have endured the trauma of flight from conflict or persecution. Others have other additional needs that have to be met."

The school achieves an impressive level of success with EAL pupils, particularly in the Early Years. Typically, around 50 - 70% of the school community require additional and specialist help to learn English and yet over three quarters achieve a Good Level of Development as they leave Reception. This solid start is built on in subsequent years.

So what's the secret? "There isn't one", argues Carol. "As well as involving our brilliant parents who overwhelmingly welcome the opportunities we create for their children we pay attention to a number of well rehearsed and well evidenced practices."

Ryan Johnson - EY lead - explains; "We create a language rich environment with an emphasis on language acquisition. We assess pupils very swiftly on arrival and have a range of interventions at our disposal to accelerate learning." These are often led by multi-lingual staff who can engage with pupils and parents, model the use of English and translate where necessary. Staff work to build pupils' listening skills and build vocabulary around children's interests." Ryan explains further, "I often group pupils so that EAL pupils are alongside those learners with greater English expertise and I create provision - including play based learning - that encourages communication. Ultimately, progress is built upon very high expectations and knowing each pupil individually."

Carol embraces the EAL dimension of the school: "It's definitely something to celebrate. Our pupils bring a breadth of culture and experience that benefits everyone."



Art by Year 5 @ Stokesley Primary Academy

2

the **enquire**
learning trust

Signature pedagogies: peer critique

If you've never read Ron Berger's work, you really should. Failing that, look up Austin's Butterfly on Youtube. This is a great lesson in redrafting and feedback and how these can help a child create a more accurate 'scientific' drawing of a butterfly. It's Ron Berger at his persuasive best.

Our colleagues at Elliston Academy in Cleethorpes believe that every learner can be an Austin. They are passionate about every single child. Whatever a child's prior attainment, socio-economic background or their individual needs there's a deep seated and shared understanding that everyone can consistently strive to improve. Revealing specific next steps for improvement is empowering and inspires self-driven improvement that has, quite simply, become a way of life.

Critique works in the same way as any advice; learning to drive a car makes sense if you are told precise steps to take to make a specific manoeuvre rather than told 'take care next time' or 'reverse in that space better tomorrow'. Principal, Caroline Patterson suggests that, "In our academy, we have a relentless drive for aiming for the best and the use of critique is instrumental in this. Children and adults use critique - and not criticism - to encourage and inspire others and themselves to consider the very next step in their learning." She adds that, "Critique must be kind, helpful and specific." Elliston's experience -backed by a wealth of research evidence - reveals that the latter, in particular, is vital if we are to reveal exactly how progress can occur. Teacher and SLT member Kate Nicholson argues that, "Success criteria, targets or whatever is used to ladder the steps to improvement, can never be vague or generalised. Specific, precise guidance gives the learner no choice but to be totally clear on what is necessary for success."

Caroline reminds us that this approach has to be built upon a secure culture where every single member of the school community buys into the belief in high aspirations and critique is welcomed and not resented. She says that, "Applying critique to every area of school has raised standards in behaviour and conduct as well as learning. Nothing is ever 'finished' at Elliston. There is always another level to take learning beyond what might be initially considered possible."