



Using lesson study as a whole-school approach to improving guided writing

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Introduction

Details

What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

This developmental work stems from support carried out directly with the school in my role as English consultant. Teachers identified a need for improving their understanding of the planning, teaching and delivery of guided writing. As members of staff work well collaboratively as a supportive team, I considered lesson study as a key tool in supporting the development of pedagogical knowledge.

Who might find this case study useful?

Subject leaders and Middle leaders, Headteachers, Senior Leadership Teams, National Strategy Consultants, School Improvement Partners (SIPs), LA strategic leaders for School Improvement

Key Points

Point 1

How can middle leaders within school support each other through collaboration and discussion?

Point 2

How can lesson study provide clarity of subject knowledge and support with improving outcomes for children?

Who

School and setting

School

Fountains C of E Primary School

Type of School

Primary

Local authority

North Yorkshire

Region

Yorkshire and Humber

Percentage

Less than 20%

Learners

Year groups

EYFS, Year 1 (KS1), Year 2 (KS1), Year 3 (KS2), Year 4 (KS2), Year 5 (KS2), Year 6 (KS2)

Gender

Both

Performance

At age-related expectation

Whole school

Yes

Teachers

FS, KS1, KS2

Support Staff

FS, KS1, KS2

Leadership teams

Middle leaders, Senior leaders, Subject leaders

Local authority advisers

Primary

Number of classes

4

Number of adult learners

5

What

What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

English - Writing, Assessment and Target Setting, Self evaluation and review

What main aspect of pupil learning were you trying to improve?

Group Work, Self-assessment and peer assessment, Independent learning skills

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

In the targeted focus on guided writing across the school, the desired impact on pupil learning was to further focus guided sessions on pupils' authorial needs as they arise throughout the teaching sequence.

What were your success criteria?

To identify a school-level improvement need through data analysis (guided writing); To use collaborative planning and observation within the lesson study model to build upon a shared understanding of guided writing by establishing the learning that has taken place; To improve pedagogy in relation to targeted teaching through the use of guided writing; To analyse the improvements that have been made including measured impact on children's learning and improved teaching focus in guided sessions

What did you do? What teaching approaches did you use to achieve the intended impact?

AfL (Assessment for Learning), Teaching sequences

Describe

Through data analysis, the school identified a need to improve writing outcomes for children. All teachers within the school are fully using the Primary Framework to plan teaching sequences of learning or "learning journeys." Curricular targets focused on sentence structure and punctuation (Primary Framework Strand 11) have been put into place across school to further focus on writing improvement. Guided writing was explored as a method for ensuring that curricular targets are explicitly taught and that aspects of the writing process are reinforced and supported through guided sessions. The purpose of the lesson study model that was used in this instance was to challenge and support teachers so their knowledge and understanding of the process of planning for guided writing was strengthened. Assessment for learning is a key approach that teachers use to ensure that guided

sessions are focused on pupils' needs. Assessing pupil progress (APP) assessment guidelines for writing are used termly to identify next steps in learning. The lesson study approach allowed middle leaders within the school to support each other in taking assessment information and moving children on appropriately according to their needs. The collaborative approach used within a supportive climate has helped all teachers to feel more confident about the planning and delivery of guided writing sessions.

What did you do? What approaches to supporting professional development (CPD) and learning for adults were used?

Training, Coaching, Lesson observation, Lesson study, Learning conversation

Describe

To improve outcomes in writing, the consultant provided training focused on the development of guided writing and its varied role throughout the teaching sequence and the writing process. The lesson study model was used to embed knowledge of guided writing in classroom practice. Coaching was facilitated through lesson observations. Members of staff had time after the observed lessons to engage in focused discussion with the target children to measure the impact of the guided work. Learning conversations took place after all observations were completed. All teachers discussed the impact of the model on classroom practice and identified next steps for development.

What CPD materials, research or internal or external expertise have you drawn on?

Primary English consultant support (North Yorkshire LA);

Colleagues' expertise & support within school;

'Improving writing with a focus on guided writing' Ref: 00618-2007BKT-EN;

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/imp_writ/

'Leading improvement using the Primary Framework' Ref: 00484-2007BKT-EN;

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/leading_improvement/

'Improving practice and progression through Lesson Study: a handbook for headteachers, leading teachers and subject leaders' Ref:00887-2007DWO-EN

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframework/downloads/pdf/prifwkcpd2_houta_0088707.pdf

How were you supported?

Other

Describe

The consultant drew upon current information provided by National Strategies regarding the lesson study model of CPD and materials to support the improvement of guided writing in order to appropriately target the needs of the school.

What information or data did you use to measure progress towards and achieve your success criteria?

Observation outcomes

Impact

Impact on pupil learning

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

Targeted support is provided to pupils based on needs as they arise throughout the teaching sequence. Guided writing is seen by both teachers and pupils as a flexible approach to support progress through each "learning journey". Curricular targets are being explicitly taught through the use of guided sessions and measured success towards targets is being identified through the use of Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) guidelines for pupils in KS2. Children are more aware of next steps in learning and can use self-evaluation tools effectively to determine success and areas for improvement.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

The following are quotes recorded from pupils who were observed as part of the lesson study approach:

"I like to use the displays in the classroom to help me learn."

"I learned to read through my work and spot where it could be better."

"I like looking at my own work and making it better."

"I know what I need to do next to make my writing better."

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

Pupil progress data

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

Observation outcomes, Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Evidence of the impact on pupil learning is qualitatively contained within the observation outcomes and pupil interview information gained by all members of staff. Pupils were clearly focused on next steps in learning as was evidenced in the choices they made throughout the observed lessons. Objective feedback given by observers through data collection in pupil interviews reflected the impact on learning and the increased independence of pupils as more ownership of the learning process was evident.

Related Information

[Observation of guided writing sample](#)

Impact on teaching

What has been the impact on teaching?

Teachers felt valued during this CPD exercise as they were part of the learning process. Observational feedback within the coaching model provided a "risk-free" environment to discuss the impact of guided writing and ways forward. Greater confidence in the teaching of guided sessions has been the key outcome with all staff clearly focused on the needs of children and planning sessions accordingly to target those needs.

Quotes you think are relevant to impact on teaching

The following are quotes taken from members of staff who participated in the study:

"I've learned that children don't always need me to model writing in the guided session. Sometimes, it is has more use to the children if I support them during the session based on where they are in their writing."

"By observing others, I have seen opportunities to share resources across the school that will help with transition and consistency of approach."

"By having another pair of eyes in the classroom, I have more opportunities to reflect on what children are getting out of the lesson."

Evidence of impact on teaching

Teacher perceptions, Evidence from planning, Evidence from observation and monitoring

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Teacher's perceptions of the components of guided writing and its role within the teaching sequence have been clarified. Teachers have realised that guided writing is a flexible tool to be used throughout the teaching sequence, based on individual pupil needs. Guided writing groups are flexible and fluid and not necessarily based on numerical target needs. Curricular targets are taught explicitly through guided sessions as evidenced in planning. Teachers have considered the use of guided writing as a tool to support children before, during and after writing to provide scaffolded support throughout the learning journey. The purpose of guided writing is to provide a bridge of support between shared writing and independent writing. Teachers use their knowledge of children to decide who needs the support of the metaphorical bridge and who can cross safely into independent writing without additional support.

Impact on school organisation and school leadership

What has been the impact on school organisation and school leadership?

The headteacher has fully participated in the lesson study model alongside all members of staff. She has expressed interest in using the lesson study model of CPD in the future to develop teaching practice in other areas of the curriculum. Guided writing has been a key focus for improvement this year. Through the use of in-school CPD, members of staff have been given quality time to engage in discussions which have improved their professional understanding of guided writing and its role in the

impact on children's learning. Middle leaders have been empowered through the model by fostering professional discussion focused on whole-school improvement in writing.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on school organisation and school leadership

Members of staff are considering using the lesson study model of CPD again in the 08-09 school year. During the current school year, the lesson study approach was used alongside dissemination of information regarding Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) in writing. Information gained from the APP assessment guidelines were fed directly into the identification of groups for responsive teaching based on need. Next year, staff will look more closely at Assessing Pupil Progress in reading and will possibly complete a lesson study cycle on the improvement of reading across the school.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and school leadership

In regards to the impact on school leadership, middle leaders now have a greater role in school improvement through the identification of areas for development and the supportive climate created through the lesson study model of CPD. A greater clarity of Assessment for Learning across the school has provided a focus for targeted teaching and learning during guided sessions. The applications of this model can be used in the future to further develop pedagogy in other areas of the curriculum.

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

The key element that made the difference to pupils' learning in this school was the drive of all members of staff towards school improvement. All stakeholders played a role in the improvement of writing across the school. The supportive climate evident within the school allowed teachers to improve practice and, therefore, improve outcomes for children.

Summary

What key resources would people who want to learn from your experience need access to?

Literacy guidance papers & publications (e.g. 'Developing Early Writing', 'Grammar for Writing', text type progression papers, etc) all available at:

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframework/library/Literacy/publications/>

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

Guided Writing CPD materials on the online Framework (training materials, film clips, guidance booklets etc):

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframework/cpd/literacy/improving_writing_day_1/

'Leading Improvement using the Primary Framework':

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primaryframework/cpd/slt/>

If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

See the information provided in the flow chart under "related information".

What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

The school has considered the utilisation of the lesson study model of CPD to further pedagogical knowledge and understanding across a range of curricular areas. The consultant would like the school to share their practice with others in the cluster to improve outcomes for a wider range of children.

Related Information

[Flow chart describing the process of lesson study used](#)[Observation of guided writing sample](#)[Pupil conference feedback samples](#)