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**LEARNING AND TEACHING IMPROVEMENT GROUP**

Minute of meeting, Monday 4thJune 2018

**Present:** Caroline Martin (Chair), Bruce Robertson, Colin Richardson, Duncan Robertson, Kelly Fairbairn, Sarah Martin, Bruce Watson, Andrew Hay, Matt Corfield.

**Apologies:** Ian Yule, Aubrey Sanderson, Gillian Cochrane, Victoria Lowe, Andrew Garner.

There were no matters arising from the last minutes.

CM began the meeting by reading out an email from A. Thacker sent on behalf of the Expressive Arts Faculty. The faculty had spent some time discussing the merits of learning rounds and peer observation, and had concluded that learning rounds provided a more balanced approach to observation and discussion and put forward the suggestion that learning rounds should perhaps take more precedence next session. The group then discussed the benefits derived from the recent learning rounds - such as the range of subjects observed, the immediacy of the discussion and the non-threatening nature of the observations - but also the challenges involved, such as the time taken to organize it, finding enough volunteers and providing cover for those taking part. Ways to expand the wider impact to the whole staff were also mentioned, for example, discussing aspects of good practice observed at faculty meetings. BR said that the minimum expectation was for all staff to carry out three peer observations, although all teachers were free to do more if they chose. BW thought that VL might be considering expanding the learning rounds to three next session, albeit perhaps on a smaller scale. It was agreed that the three rounds of peer observation would be entered into next session’s calendar as normal and that any learning rounds organized would be scheduled at the same time. AH suggested changing the name to “observation fortnight” on the calendar but it was felt that this might lead to confusion as to the nature of the observation required. CM said that one of the biggest challenges of peer observation remained finding the time for a follow-up discussion. BR said that this discussion might not be required – if the teacher had a specific focus and had learned what they wanted to learn from the observation, then was a discussion really necessary? KF said that this should be made clear to all staff. DR suggested putting a stack of lesson observation toolkits into the staffroom, where they would be easily available. CM suggested that a small number could be included in the teacher welcome pack in August, and BR said that a list of the professional reading group’s texts could also be added.

SM then asked MC if he, as an NQT, had found the lesson observation toolkit useful. MC felt that the toolkit had been very valuable and had helped him to define his strengths and weaknesses more easily. BR asked if the group would be in favour of making further changes to the language of the toolkit – some amendments had been made about a year ago. The group preferred to leave the toolkit unchanged for the time being. AH said that he and CR had made a landscape template of specific parts of the toolkit, such a questioning, and that this template could be put onto the website.

SM raised the issue of shadowing pupils for part of a day. She suggested that staff might wish to observe successful strategies used by other teachers when dealing with specific pupils. BR said that staff should perhaps be encouraged to make more use of the yellow CPD request forms to ask for cover to allow them to shadow a particular class or pupil for part of a day.

AH then asked whether it was worth gathering an overview of PRD needs. BR said that he had this information and that it would simply be a matter of getting permission from all teachers to share this. He added that this was a feature of the learning culture in other schools. CM suggested that it could be a rolling agenda item for one LTIG member to share with the group their progress in improving the areas they had identified in their PLP. AH thought that it would be good to use staff meetings to allow colleagues to work together with others interested in developing the same toolkit elements. KF thought that some time should be spent at a staff meeting or CAT session relaunching the peer observation fortnights to bring new impetus to them. BR said that there could be as many as 6 slots for learning and teaching in the next programme of CAT sessions. BR will collate the areas of focus for the whole staff and share this information next session. It will also be used to help plan the work of the LTIG, regarding professional learning workshops. KF suggested staff should be asked to opt out of sharing this information if they were not happy for it to be made public, instead of asking people to opt in.

CR then spoke about the EHS Teaching website. There are several more posts in the pipeline, but he is going to wait until the start of next term as he felt this would be better timing.

KF updated the group on the progress of the Professional Reading Group. The group are currently reading the *Making Good Progress* text by Daisy Christodoulou. The last scheduled meeting was postponed, but there will be another meeting soon. There have been some really good discussions in the group, and themes of good practice have been developing. VL liked the idea of writing a summary of each text, broken down into the sections covered at each meeting. *Practice Perfect* by Doug Lemov will be the next text. KF said that it would be good to get more people involved in the group and that she was looking for ideas on how to share the information that were not too onerous. This would build on the culture of learning being developed at Eyemouth High School. BR showed the group some texts he has purchased recently for the professional reading library: *Visible Learning into Action* by John Hattie; *Creating the Schools our Children Need* by Dylan Wiliam; *Outstanding Formative Assessment* and *Active Learning through Formative Assessment,* both by Shirley Clarke.DR suggested that these books should go into the library before the summer holidays as staff will have more time to read them, should they wish to do so. BR will make the texts available along with Geoff Petty’s DVD *Top Ten Methods.* CM asked about templates of the Geoff Petty materials .CR said that copies are available on the website.

The discussion moved on to the Additional Professional Learning programme. BR said that attendance at workshops had been limited – 3,4 or 5 participants each time – but that a variety of faculties had been represented. The workshops are being led by a number of people. CR received very positive feedback on his workshop. It would be easy to repeat these workshops and offer them again next session, either on a voluntary basis or as part of the learning and teaching CAT sessions.

Next, BR gave a faculty fortnight update. The English faculty fortnight has just finished. The process was a little disjointed, as BR was out of school several times, but this gave CR and KF the opportunity to carry out some joint observations. BR suggested that it might be good to get more PTs involved in observations; however, CR felt that it was essential to have a member of the SMT involved to maintain the official aspect. The only faculty which has not been observed is European Languages, although BW was involved in the social subjects’ observations. HB is the only pastoral teacher who has been observed, because of staffing issues. BR is considering amending the programme because it is so time consuming – next year the observations may be shortened to one week and then return to a fortnight the following year. He added that the team of observers needs to be expanded and he would like to increase the involvement of RC and DP. There is a programme of cross-schools’ observations happening in some subjects – maths, English and business management have all organized PT observations. CR said that it was important that there was a follow up from the previous year’s faculty fortnight. BR and CR feel that they are now “on the same page” regarding observations as a result of carrying out so many jointly. SM said that staff found CR very approachable and helpful in the follow up discussions. AH said that it was important that there was a balance struck between quality assurance and a professional development conversation. CR reminded the group that he is available to carry out observations on a Thursday as part of his role as PT of Learning and Teaching.

BR mentioned the new Pupil Learning and Teaching Group and asked about volunteers – CR, AS and CM had all previously expressed an interest in becoming involved in this group. BR also asked if there was anyone in the group who might be interested in taking on professional enquiry or practitioner enquiry next session. He said that his understanding had changed since he attended a recent presentation; he said that practitioner enquiry could be a reading based task where one engaged with published research, or could be more about studying the effect of a change to practice in a teacher’s own classroom. He gave an example: a teacher wants to find out “Why fractions are difficult to teach?” S/he picks 2 or 3 pupils and tries out different things try to gather evidence and come up with an answer. MC is doing some research at the moment as part of his practitioner enquiry. DR said that he might be interested in carrying out some form of enquiry but would have to know more about what was required before he could commit to it.

The next meeting will be held early in the new session. A date will be decided when the new calendar is made available.

*C. Martin, 12.06.18*