

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

Quality Assurance Policy (Teaching and Learning)

Rationale

The purpose of Quality Assurance (QA) is to support self-evaluation at Ellesmere Port Catholic High School. The Ofsted Framework places self-evaluation at the heart of the work of leaders and managers; put simply, schools must know themselves. Quality assurance activities are engaged in so that we have confidence in our view of the work that we do. All QA feeds into departmental and the whole-school self-evaluation form (SEF).

QA processes examine a range of our work and when appropriately engaged in ensure that self-evaluation is accurate and robust. Moreover, the collection and analysis of rigorous data, both quantitative and qualitative, allows us to monitor the implementation and impact of policies and interventions.

Evaluation at all levels is critical to the success of the school. We need to be reflective practitioners so that attention is given to making improvements to provision and, as a consequence, students have their best chance of maximizing their potential. Evaluation should take place in a non-threatening environment so that honest appraisal of our work is undertaken and appropriate planning for improvement can follow. QA should focus on identifying strengths which can be celebrated, built upon and shared as much as on areas requiring attention.

When properly conducted and gathered together, QA provides a firm foundation for further subject and whole-school improvement plans.

Aims

- To improve the quality of learning and teaching across school.
- To review the work of subjects, departments and other teams in school.
- To identify best practice and enable that to be shared.
- To pinpoint specific areas where intervention is needed.
- To enable exploration of aspects of our work where development is required.
- To determine the impact and success of policies and interventions.
- To provide tools for quality assurance that enable provision to be appropriately evaluated.
- To ensure that data informs priorities and improvement plans.

Process & Activities

A number of approaches and activities are engaged in to ensure the QA is thorough and robust. At a whole-school level a calendar of activities is included in the school calendar. Likewise, similar half-termly plans are produced by departmental teams. Evidence from these activities is collected in the QA file. Actions arising from these processes are recorded here too.

QA is supported with a programme of fortnightly meetings between subject leaders and the member of the senior leadership team (SLT) that line manages them. The agenda for these ensures that key

aspects (e.g. progress of specific groups, curriculum, and staff performance) are included in the professional conversation.

Formal Lesson Observations

- Lesson observations serve as a source for both professional development and a tool for departmental/school self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Lesson observations should always be a purposeful activity and the focus should always be clarified between the observee and the observer (typically, this will be a whole-school teaching and learning priority or an individual area for development).
- The focus for observations is the extent to which the teaching leads to learning for the young people and therefore attention will be on the impact on the learners of the activities taking place.
- Teachers are entitled to at least three formal observations in the year (by their line manager, by a member of SLT, or by their subject leader or other member of the department).
- Where there are specific concerns the number of observations may exceed this.
- The value of peer observation is affirmed and supported where practical.
- Lesson observations are not graded. Aspects of teaching and learning are considered against criteria which have been developed.
- Observers take a broad view when observing lessons – not only the lesson snapshot is considered but the progress of the learners is looked at, learners are spoken to about their work and learning and books and folders are examined.
- Teachers themselves are encouraged to reflect on the success of the lesson observed.
- Strengths and areas for development are recorded through the appropriate electronic form on BlueSky. Feedback for improvement is limited to a manageable scope (typically, two or three aspects).
- A conversation following the observation should take place within 48 hours.
- Next steps for the teacher's practice should be agreed from this discussion.

Learning Walks

- Learning walks enable SLT to monitor the quality of provision and learning in the school on a day-to-day basis.
- The focus for learning walks is communicated to teachers in advance of them taking place through the calendar and weekly briefings.
- Visits to classrooms do not exceed 15 minutes.
- The focus for the classroom visits is the learning of the students and the particular identified theme.
- Findings are gathered and shared with staff (individual teachers and classes are not identified).
- Brief individual feedback is recorded in BlueSky.
- Visits to classrooms should be respectful and supportive of the teachers involved; concerns should be addressed in private at a later time.
- Departmental teams are encouraged to collaboratively work through learning walks focused on their own specific issues.

Work Scrutiny

- Work scrutiny processes allow leaders at different levels to monitor the quality of provision and learning in the school.
- Scrutiny allows teachers and leaders to explore the progress of students and classes, to examine movement through the subject curriculum, and enables the checking of the implementation of strategies, such as the marking and feedback policy and the way that this is implemented by the curriculum area for that stage of learning.
- Student work may also be looked at as part of observation or a learning walk.
- Records of work scrutiny activity and actions to follow should be recorded and kept in the QA file.
- Self-review and evaluation at a departmental level complement whole-school activity.

Documentation

- Schemes of learning are looked at to ensure that the planning is clear, developmental and appropriate to what is required.
- Assessment practice is considered so that policy is being adhered to and effective approaches can be shared more widely.

Achievement and Pastoral Data Analysis

- A key element in the evaluation of the quality of teaching is the regular review of progress through data breakfast meetings.
- In advance of the meeting teachers need to analyse the attainment of their classes and subject leaders need to develop a departmental perspective.
- Data related to attendance, punctuality, behaviour, and exclusions is also analysed and discussed through pastoral meetings.
- Interventions to make improvement are identified as part of the process.
- A governor may attend data breakfast meetings.

Student Voice

- Questionnaires or surveys examining different aspects of provision are carried out on a regular basis.
- These are scheduled to ensure a broad coverage of the student body.
- Further investigation through student panels are sometimes used in order to find out how provision can be improved.

Form Time Monitoring

- Pastoral leaders and SLT carry out regular visits to form rooms in order to ensure that this aspect of the school day is of a high quality.
- Results of the monitoring are gathered and shared; appropriate actions to create improvement are identified.

Conclusion

- At a whole-school and departmental level, it is important that information from different QA activities are triangulated to properly evaluate our practice.
- QA should not encourage mere conformity but should help us probe for understanding in areas where improvements need to be made.
- Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation are not ends in themselves. The activities we engage in should serve to help us make improvements in provision for our young people and ultimately, to help promote their achievement.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body



Mr J Coucill

Chair of Governors

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Date for Review:July 2019

Lead for Review: Mr P Reilly

Governor Committee:Achievement, Teaching & Learning.....