



Learning and teaching - Improvement guides Promotion of active learning

A school is good to the extent that...

Learners experience different approaches to learning and teaching which include personalisation and choice and a sense of achievement.

Teachers' explanations of new topics make appropriate links with previous learning and are relevant to the lives of the learners. Children are encouraged to explain key ideas and concepts in their own words.

Teachers' questions focus on key learning aims and they invite learners to think about them. Learners understand and can describe these aims and success criteria.

A school is excellent to the extent that...

Learners experience an extensive range of learning and teaching approaches. Contexts for learning are challenging, enjoyable and enterprising and include creative and investigative activities. Young people engage confidently in such activities, and are prepared to risk making mistakes because they understand that they can learn from them. Through these activities they develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Learners have choices in their learning. Teachers' explanations of new topics and the skills pupils will learn are very clear. They fully demonstrate the links with previous learning across the curriculum and real-life situations and make new learning meaningful. Children often demonstrate or explain information, ideas, processes and skills to the teacher and to other learners. They understand that excellent learning means being able to show or explain it clearly to others in their own words, orally or in writing or pictures. Learners themselves want to reach the highest possible standards. Younger children will be involved in 'hands on' learning.

Staff questioning is skilled and young people's responses are always listened to and used to enhance their learning. By being regularly asked open questions, they learn to give considered answers from a personal viewpoint. Children get time to think and reflect before responding and they all expect to be invited to do so. Their answers lead to further questioning and dialogue which form coherent lines of enquiry.



Promotion of active learning

Tasks and activities involve learners in learning through thinking and doing, rather than by rote. Learning can be applied in new situations. Learners can work well independently and as part of a group.

Staff encourage ambition for learners. Young people can solve problems and evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues.

Class discussions are interactive and involve an appropriate range of pupils within the class. All learners understand that their individual responses will be valued.

Children as well as teachers ask questions – of each other and of the teacher. Those who are not involved in discussion participate actively by listening, thinking and reflecting. The size of the discussion group, and other contextual features, is planned to meet the children's needs. Discussions with very young children, and with less confident older children, may take place in smaller groups.

Teachers are well organised, ensure that resources are of good quality and focus on the key learning aims.

Teachers adopt approaches which ensure learners are leaders in their own learning. Learners have independent learning skills and can reflect on their own learning. They draw their own informed conclusions. They know what they are trying to achieve and seek help at appropriate times. They persevere with their learning and use a range of resources, including ICT, as they progress.

Teachers spend significant amounts of time actively teaching. They deliver learning personally to individual pupils and groups according to their needs, rather than relying on working only through textbooks.

Staff use the local community to extend and enhance learning. They are fully aware of the involvement of learners in learning outwith the classroom and school and use this in very well planned tasks and activities to raise attainment and achievement further.

Teachers present material actively in a structured way. They continuously monitor the development of pupils' understanding, tackle difficult concepts in small steps, elaborate, enhance and exemplify.

Pace and challenge of learners experiences ensures sufficient focus on challenging and successful learning for all. Accurate assessment underpins planned experiences for learners enabling all learners to apply learning in active and creative ways.