Case study: Literacy and Numeracy

Streamlining approaches to planning and assessment as a result of Benchmarks

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| **The approach:**In Bervie School, the staff work collegiately at all stages of the learning process. They engage in professional dialogue around shared progression pathways which support our ongoing assessments. The publication of the benchmarks in literacy and numeracy has increased our confidence around shared standards and expectations, as they provide a national standard for each level. Our staff work collaboratively within and across levels, planning quality, relevant learning experiences from the Experiences and Outcomes, grouping them into coherent bundles as they talk through their planning for learning. They discuss and plan their assessment of the learning using a range of approaches and strategies. The focus of planning has shifted to valuing professional dialogue over needless paperwork, thereby streamlining the planning process in our school. Staff work closely together discussing Es & Os, learning experiences, learning intentions and success criteria and approaches to assessment. They then share classes, team teach and regularly deliver learning in rotation, so that they have a broad overview of the range of ability and progression within the level. This provides a solid foundation against which to have robust dialogue around progress and achievement in relation to the benchmarks. The benchmarks provide staff and learners with a consistent vocabulary for assessment and support the identification of appropriate next steps. Our consistent approach to learning intentions, success criteria and making learning visible within our school, ensure that our pupils have a shared language of learning. They can talk about their progress and strengths and are regularly involved in identifying their own next steps. We organise a range of opportunities for pupils and staff to share our approaches with parents and families. This supports us to have a consistent approach and vocabulary of learning between home and school. With this focus on professional dialogue and learning conversations, there is a transparency to our planning of learning, teaching and assessment. Time for this is built into our collegiate calendar but collaborative working is so embedded that informal conversations about learning, teaching, assessment, our learners and their progress are a feature of daily practice. Less needs to be recorded and what is written is shared so that individual planning is reduced.  |
| **Key features:*** A streamlined approach to planning.
* Moderation evident at all stages of the learning process.
* Assessment is discussed and planned for during the planning stages.
* Quality professional dialogue is valued and protected time allocated for this in the collegiate calendar.
* A shared language of assessment across the school community.
* A shared approach to planning and delivery of learning within and across levels.
* Genuine collaboration throughout the staff team.
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| **Impact:*** Coherent approaches to assessment, leading to improved learner progress.
* Shared expectations and understanding of standards within and across levels, throughout the school.
* Improved staff confidence from using the benchmarks when making judgements on learner progress and achievement.
* Greater consistency in our approach to assessment and reporting to parents across the school.
* A significant reduction in bureaucracy and an increase in professional dialogue around the planning of learning, teaching and assessment.
* Improved learning experiences for all children, with staff sharing expertise, experience and strengths to support one another.
* Learners more able to talk about their learning, progress, achievements and next steps.
* Smoother internal transitions with all staff working with a wider range of pupils and being familiar with their abilities, strengths and areas for development.
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| **Success factors:*** Clear curriculum pathways – all staff involved in the bundling of Experiences and Outcomes from which to plan quality learning experiences.
* Benchmarks providing national standards against which to assess progress and achievement.
* Supportive culture within the school, based on professional relationships built on trust and openness.
* Expectation of collaborative working within the school.
* Time built into the collegiate calendar for professional dialogue and collaboration at all stages of the learning process.
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| **Looking forwards:*** Take a planned, considered approach to making use of the benchmarks for other curriculum areas to support assessment, based on self-evaluation.
* Continue to monitor the impact of this way of working on learner engagement, progress, achievement and attainment as well as staff confidence.
* Plan for increased cluster opportunities for professional dialogue around the learning process to ensure shared understanding of standards and consistency across neighbouring schools and particularly at points of transition.
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