
Overview of joint lesson observations – 29/11/16

Five lessons were jointly observed – three at The Porch and two at Bridgeway. The teaching styles that were observed varied from the charismatically pacy to the calmly measured. However, in all lessons the quality of teaching and learning was impressively strong. Indeed, in all observed lessons the teaching style of individual teachers succeeded in engaging the learners being taught. It was also positive that the students got access to a range of teaching styles as this prepares them for meeting different training styles in later life.

With regards to teaching and learning all the lessons observed were of a high quality. Some of the strengths observed in all lessons are outlined below:

- Highly focused lesson design with sharp learning objectives.
- High demands of student involvement and engagement with their learning.
- High levels of effective teacher-student interaction.
- Effective use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining that did not spoon-feed but instead encouraged/enabled students to find answers themselves.
- A strong emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for students to talk both individually and with peers.
- A strong expectation that students will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently
- Effective and regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils.
- Skilled deployment of teaching assistants with abundant evidence of effective teamwork and high levels of trust between classroom staff.
- Learning that was effectively differentiated/personalised.

In reality one off lesson observation will also pick up other aspects of positive practice that were able to be observed in some lessons but were not evident in others. It should be noted that this does not mean this practice was not in-situ in those classes just that the learning task or lesson observation's timing did not lend itself to seeing them in that specific lesson. Some other examples of successful practice seen include:

- Highly effective use of self and peer assessment/review.
- Outstanding use of formative and summative assessment to effectively track and monitor student progress.
- Skilled use of ICT, such as whiteboards, to support learning.
- Good links with how the learning being undertaken will assist with key skills required in GCSEs.
- Skilled refocusing of students that ensured they were directed back on task in a non-confrontational and non-intrusive manner.

It is clear that the ACS has devoted a great deal of time to developing Quality First Teaching. It was readily apparent that the students observed were enjoying and enhancing their learning. There is clearly a great deal of teaching expertise within the organisation. Perhaps the next stage of development is to reflect upon whether more opportunities could be offered for staff to engage in peer review/observation. There might also be some mileage in reviewing Teaching Assistant practice both to affirm strengths in practice and to identify if there are aspects of their work that can be further enhanced.

In closing, the five lessons observed were all strong with students demonstrably enjoying, achieving and succeeding in their learning.