

Update on Pioneer School Work

We have welcomed being a Pioneer School and are enthusiastic about innovation to improve learning for young people. It has been very good networking with colleagues and planning for change. However, we have been unsure as to the expected rate of innovation in our school. So, we have undertaken the following activity, but take the view that we are trialling new experiences and will monitor and evaluate at the end of the first year.

- Given INSET time for whole school to discuss curriculum innovation and Successful Lives
- Provided opportunities in various settings for teaching staff to look at Four Purposes and understand the way in which learning is moving
- Attended primary partner schools' meeting to talk about Successful Lives
- Visited primary sector to look at Foundation Phase
- Consulted with staff about areas of learning and experience that could be developed in phase 1- Sept 2016.
- Discussed innovation at full Governing Body meetings and also Staffing and Curriculum Panel meetings
- Planned strategically for changes to curriculum in Sept 2016 in terms of staffing, planning for learning and assessment. Innovation is a feature of the School Development Plan.
- Senior leaders have worked collaboratively with staff to develop schemes of learning and assessment which staff have themselves devised based on the four purposes
- Key staff visited Olchfa in Swansea.

At Key Stage 3:

Humanities.

- One teacher is allocated to one class, each undertaking a combination of History, Geography and RE through themes.
- The team has been developing resources, Schemes of Learning and lesson plans. They are beginning to develop assessments and ways in which progress can be tracked meaningfully, moving towards a type of assessment using statements of progress rather than raw data. Being a Pioneer school has allowed us to trial innovative approaches to curriculum. For example, one unit is called “Creation” and it blends RE (we are looking at the religious aspect of how the world began), Geography (pupils are looking at how the world is made – tectonic plates, Big Bang theory) and History where they are studying prehistoric periods including a range of primary source analysis

Expressive Arts.

- Expressive Arts (combining Drama, Music and Art) have been developing a thorough Scheme of learning including lesson plans and resources.
- The team are sharing starters and plenaries and incorporating another aspect of the arts into their main discipline.
- Working with Humanities, the expressive arts are developing assessment and reporting. The team has also run an immersion day for Year 7s, where the pupils will plan the next stage of their learning.

Tech/ICT

- These two departments are taking a different route to innovate in that they are working on a project using microbits, which are small microprocessors.
- IT will be delivering the theory behind their use whilst technology will be delivering the practical application of the microbits.
- We are hoping to achieve a better balance between coding and creativity in ICT.

iLearn

- This is the course that we are running in Year 7 to support skills which underpin all other types of learning.
- We are combining Successful Lives and coaching with Growth Mindset and Learning to Learn so that we build resilience and capacity to make change and significant improvement. We are then learning to apply these skills in challenge based learning activities which mirror the Skills Challenge Certificate in KS4. In this way, we hope to develop the necessary skills through KS3.

In the first half term,

- Schemes of Learning/ Activities for term have been reviewed:
- Humanities have carried out questionnaire to elicit views from pupils about their learning and to inform future planning
- Expressive Arts have undertaken an immersion day for pupils to have input into learning for the Spring Term. This involved feedback from pupils. The pupils asked 'BIG' questions that will now form the basis of term 2's work.
- Both Humanities and Expressive Arts have developed blogs where pupils have been asking key questions and leaving feedback and parents have also commented.
- In these areas, staff have created assessment rubrics to monitor progress in line with whole school data collection. For term one we have monitored progress in terms of 'Beginning, Progressing, Achieving, Exceeding' which are qualified by key statements that are based on the four purposes.
- Schemes of Learning have incorporated the LNF and signpost assessments sit well in the programme. In our school, each of these separate departments in Humanities has distinct LNF responsibilities which are assessed.
- In Expressive Arts, music, drama and Art all have responsibility for Oracy. There is a range of video evidence to document levels of attainment in oracy.
- The tracking of the LNF sits well in new schemes of learning

Catherine Edwards

Nov 11th 2016