



Science leadership tools: learning walk framework

Introduction

Learning walks help subject leaders to get a clear picture of what's happening in science across the school to support them in assessing the quality of provision. They involve informal snapshot observations of lessons, around 10–20 minutes, and if planned well can really offer an insight into progression across the school. Learning walks are most powerful when the observer really focuses on a specific aspect of teaching and learning such as working scientifically skills development, effective use of formative assessment to secure progress, or comparing the progress of different groups of learners. These observations can be really supportive in identifying the professional development needs of teachers of science and inform strategic planning for the development of science education. The lack of formality is also less threatening for teachers and helps to break down barriers and open up professional discussions about teaching and learning in science.

Top tips



- **Identify the focus of the learning walk**
It should be based on a specific aspect of science teaching and learning that features on the school development plan.
- **Decide who will participate**
Keep the number of observers to a maximum of two and select which teachers you would like to observe, ideally from different Key Stages so that progression is visible.
- **Identify the information you need to collect in advance**
Plan your questions in advance and make a list of specific things you want to look at.
- **Decide when you'll carry out the learning walk**
Teachers may need to adjust their weekly timetable so that they are all teaching science at the same time to make the logistics easier.
- **Give teachers and teaching assistants advanced notice**
Ideally, each learning walk should be on the school calendar; if that is not possible, at least a week's notice should be given and everyone participating should know the focus of the walk in advance.

- **Do not disrupt the lesson**

Have all your paperwork and questions to hand, choose appropriate times to ask questions without disrupting the learning. When talking to teachers/teaching assistants keep it short so that they can focus on the learners.

- **Analysis, reporting and sharing**

Analyse and report the data you have collected in a way that does not identify individual teachers that you observed. Share your findings with all stakeholders.

- **Set actions**

Following the learning walk, set actions to address any issues arising from the learning walk.

Primary science learning walk template

Focus	Date:	Time:
Primary science focus of learning walk:		

Year group	Teaching and learning strategies Modelling, demonstration, teacher explanation, enquiry, questioning, explicit teaching of skills, teacher facilitation	Discussions with pupils What are you learning? What skills are you developing? How will you be successful?	Pupils' progress Are children moving on in their learning? Are preconceptions identified and built upon? Is there increased demand in children's work through the key stages?	Pupils' work Reporting, recording, depth of learning, making connections, differentiation	General comments Resources, displays to support learning

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