

HH PEER REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

A strategy for school-to-school support for improvement

Subject Peer Reviews

Peer Review Strategy

The Peer Review Strategy reaches the improvement parts that other processes fail to reach. This is because trusted professional expert colleagues come, at your invitation, to help you to critically evaluate, to reflect and to problem solve together in the areas you know are your weakest. Because this is the express purpose of the exercise and carried out in partnership with others facing the same sort of challenges in their own contexts, you actively and specifically share the things, which you are least proud of and therefore cannot fail to make them better with the benefit of such a helpful process. This is the direct opposite of more adversarial approaches, where you do all you can to hide every weakness for fear that it should become a loose thread and be used to unravel the whole rug.

The Aim of the Peer Review System

The Peer Review system aims to provide a reflective self-evaluation process, giving insight into individual schools effectiveness in agreed areas, provided by peer colleagues working in a similar situation to your own, in their adopted role of 'critical professional friend'.

What is it?

It is a visit to your school by other Headteachers/senior leaders. They will spend a day with you and your school looking at agreed areas of policy and practice. Some areas are standard for all schools; others will be looked at, at your request. It is an opportunity to network between schools to share practice, learn from others and build on what works well. It provides a great chance to share professional expertise and improve provision.

Peer Review - Pedagogy

Peer Review has been used in a range of educational contexts as a strategy for enhancing self-evaluation through external reference. The common denominator in all models is that peers come together and spend time in each other's contexts to review practice, share expertise, recommend strategies for development and challenge each other to achieve continuous improvement.

Trust between schools is an essential feature of the process. Participating schools will need to have the confidence to share honest self-evaluation with their peers and in

turn will find that the experience builds trust between colleagues who gain respect for each other. **'Every school can learn something from their peers'**.

The peer review process ensures that the benefits are reciprocal. Each school gains from the insights of others, contributes expertise to support their peers and takes away models of practice that influence change in their own school.

The Peer Review process - At a glance

The peer review involves a number of schools (3/4). Each school identifies a theme or area of their development that it wishes to review through the process. The group spend a day in each of the schools conducting the review, during which they may tour the school, visit classes, meet with staff and review documentation as appropriate to the theme. At the end of the day, peers provide feedback to the host Headteacher. Schools may then decide to meet again to review the impact of any changes made by the school.

Setting up a Peer Review - Top Tips

1. Establish a group of schools

- Consider schools that offer contrasts and are not in direct competition for pupils
- Schools new to the process might initially work with one who has
- Peer review may not be appropriate for all schools at the particular point in their improvement journey.

2. Prepare for the review

- Commit time to meet together to plan the peer review
- Agree the themes for review in each school
- Consider how you want to organise each day and who else to involve
- Agree any information to provide in advance, for example data or policies
- relating to the focus of the visit
- Establish agreement regarding confidentiality
- Set all Peer Review dates and times in advance
- Plan a schedule for each day, allowing time for an initial input by the host Headteacher and sufficient time for discussion at the end of the visit
- Establish your expectations regarding the reports to be produced.

3. Choose the theme for review

- Each school may want to choose their own theme, this might derive from the SDIP or from a recent inspection as appropriate
- The theme is likely to be one which features within the school's priorities
- Headteachers need to be prepared to be honest in the self-evaluation and to present their peers with an accurate picture.

4. Conduct the visits

- Circulate a detailed plan for the day in advance
- The host school may provide a brief introduction on the day, to reinforce the focus and provide contextual information
- The host is responsible for briefing staff and students and ensuring they understand the context of the visitors who will be in the school and classes
- Host Headteachers should avoid 'showcasing' or micro-managing the visit
- Arrange the day to allow maximum flexibility for appreciative enquiry and opportunities for peers to gain as many perspectives as possible.

5. Reporting on the visit

- A verbal report on the visit and the key observations should be made at the end of the day
- A short written report will be provided either produced by the visitors
- Headteachers/senior leaders/subject leaders need to be both supportive and challenging in their reflections, offering practical suggestions and balancing the celebration of positive features with notes on areas for development
- The host school is responsible for considering/planning/implementing any actions arising from the visit
- The report and its contents remain confidential between the peers and are shared within the host school at the host Headteacher's discretion
- The report may comment on the observations relating to theme but it is also useful to comment on the peer review process itself.

6. Following up

- Visitors should remember to thank those involved in the visits
- Host Headteachers should arrange a debrief session to inform school staff (and students/parents where appropriate) of the outcomes
- It is useful for Headteachers to discuss the outcomes of the peer review with their governors
- Following a review, Headteachers may wish to meet again, for example 6 months later, to review and discuss the changes made in the schools as a result of the peer review and early indicators of impact.

Table 1: Timeline for the Subject Peer Review

Date	Activity	Resources	Person Responsible
tbc	Briefing to staff on upcoming review	Staff meeting time	Host Headteacher and subject leader

Handford Hall Primary School 2022/23

	Preparation of the Peer Review and school data package	School data shared with the Peer Review Panel (subject leaders from OMAT schools) beforehand Peer Review theme and timetable agreed	Host school subject leader
	Peer Review day	Verbal Feedback to the Host Headteacher/school leaders at the end of the day	Peer Review Panel
	Peer Review Report	Agreed report is share with the Host Headteacher and subject leader	Peer Review Panel

Example of provisional timetable for Maths Peer Review at Handford Hall (Spring 1 2019)

Date	Activity	Person responsible
Preparation <i>Week before Peer Review</i>	Focus agreed by Maths coordinator and school leadership of a school hosting Peer Review. Identified areas/trends to be shared with Maths leads of schools participating in Maths Peer Review Timetable and action plan agreed	subject leaders
Peer Review 2x half-days	8.30 - arrival (protocol for the day, safeguarding, tour of the school) Visits to classes. Please note that visit to classes include planning scrutinies, book scrutinies, pupil perceptions, staff perceptions, subject lead interviews. Summary meeting - brief feedback to hosting Maths lead at the end of each day Report written and shared with all schools Follow up visit after 2 terms.	subject leaders

