

Learning Detectives Summary November 2016

By the end of the year, the Learning Detectives had carried out two observations in their specified classrooms from Reception to Year 4. The Learning Detectives also helped create a questionnaire that was given to pupils both pre and post observations and feedback. Key was the feedback that the Learning Detectives had to give to the children in class as well as to the classroom teachers. Their observations are based on a checklist that they created, based on key traits they believed to be essential to be effective independent learners. During these observations, many things were noted and observed. The key themes that arose were:

- Use of questions by the learners themselves to 'deepen their learning' – In fact, questioning had the largest gaps on the observation sheets than any other criteria.
- To ensure that children are 'actively' engaging with the key learning trait and not just 'pretending': that they understand themselves as learners and how to independently 'deepen their learning'
- Use of helpful talk and collaboration – ensuring all pupils understand how collaboration can improve learning
- Feedback and ensuring it has all three elements as suggested by Sadler 1989, a specific goal, understanding about where the learner is now and how the learner 'closes the gap between the two' (cited in Black and Wiliam 1998, p. 10).

Next steps from these observations is thinking about how to engage the Learning Detectives as 'critics and makers' of learning, to ensure they have a better understanding themselves of learning, actively aware of what is necessary for learning to take place for themselves and at a whole school level.

Impact:

- All classrooms have a 5 point plan – or children can talk about their five point plan.
- Children in Year 1 to year 5 very aware of what the Learning Detectives are looking for – however, we need to ensure they are 'engaging' with these behaviours, not just 'acting' them out.
- Clear that questioning by pupils is an area that needs to be strengthened, therefore this is the next project for the Learning Detectives – they are putting together a presentation for all classes, to teach children/teachers about what effective questioning would look like. This would not have been identified as a major area for development had it not been for the LD observations.
- Pupils in these classrooms were very clear about what the feedback was that the LD had given them, making it clear that they really listened and understood to the feedback given. Teachers also responded well to this feedback. From my observations of this process, it is clear that this is the way forward with giving any type of 'learning' feedback to pupils and teachers regarding day to day lessons. Therefore, I am rethinking the approach to formal lesson observations to include LD alongside myself in doing learning observations and walks.

Another interesting point was that at the end of the term, 90% of the LD compared to 30% at the start of the programme, believed that most of the time, they can learn things if they try. 80% most of the time, are willing to have a go at new things compared to 40% at the start.