

Engaging active learners by using working walls



SHARING LEARNING ACROSS THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP
PEER PARTNERSHIP VALIDATED SCHOOL STRENGTH

“The working wall is a ‘third teacher’ in the room. The children know that they can use it for support, if they are not sure or need to deepen their learning.”

DAVE COLLINS, HEADTEACHER

Intention

The development of working walls, in each of the classes, is part of the school’s system to further develop and improve current assessment for learning strategies.

New systems were introduced following targeted training with another school and an external trainer.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are clear about the benefits of this type of training and the ways in which training for staff that actively involves them in their own learning too, is the most beneficial.

During the school’s training days, teachers had tasks to complete with their pupils and then share them with everyone at the next session.

Senior leaders are clear about how this type of training has been used to change middle leadership as well as teaching and learning.

They comment:

“This training pattern encapsulated what we wanted teachers to think about for their own teaching strategies to create active learning, and their own assessment for learning strategies in the classroom.



“We are now more likely to send our teachers in pairs to other schools. They can choose the best of what they have seen, and then they can begin to put it into practice. They can also share and discuss the practicalities and pitfalls of the new practice.”

“We suspected that the more children are engaged in active learning, the better their behaviour, and that has been the case.”

“Working walls have been our most successful school strategy recently.”

The assessment for learning activities that the senior leaders rate the most successful from the suite that has been introduced or re-developed include:

- talk partners
- your turn, my turn
- chilli challenge across the ability groups
- mini-whiteboards

“Our teacher wrote a WASOLL and we edited it, so then we had a WAGOLL, and she put that on the wall for us to use.”

YEAR 4 PUPIL

Implementation

There are two working walls in each classroom: one for English and one for mathematics. Working walls are adapted for each age group.

There are general principles for the working walls that have been agreed with teachers across the school:

- Key facts are put on the wall at the beginning of the week and then built on.
- The working walls are constructed with pupils and built on together.
- Examples of effective work are put on the wall, often using a clipboard as display.
- The success criteria for a piece of work is written with the pupils, rather than given to them.

The mathematics wall builds on what is being learnt overall. Its primary focus is to develop fluency, particularly in the four basic rules. One Key Stage 2 pupil explains, “In maths, the teacher takes a problem and then shows us how she works it out. Then she puts it on the wall. That’s really helpful to look at.”

The English working wall contains examples of children’s work that is linked to the core book. “If I want to

add something to my writing, I can look at the board to see what we have already written together.” says a Year 5 child.

Teachers know that working walls scaffold and support pupils’ learning. They encourage them to be independent learners, who know where to get the support they need in order to be successful.

At the heart of this type of assessment is the concept of WAGOLL and WASOLL. This is ‘what a good one looks like’ (WAGOLL) and, what a sad one looks like’ (WASOLL).

WAGOLLs and WASOLLs are flexibly used. They can be designed by the class teacher to introduce what is needed at the start of the week, or as a quick way during the lesson to correct misconceptions and further extend learning.

Working walls contain active and immediate learning across the week. Other displays, in classrooms and in shared school areas are of a different quality and reflect longer term teaching priorities.



“Senior leaders have strengthened the quality of teaching through expert coaching, underpinned by clear accountability systems.” **HFLP PEER REVIEW REPORT, LESLEY LEAK, 2018/19**

Impact

Teachers now have a very positive and dynamic view of the learner. Learning is a concrete activity, and pupils are now far more likely to be actively engaged. The benefits of strategies such as working walls in mathematics and English have spilled over into other curriculum areas.

“How do I evaluate how successful the working wall is in each class?” asks the headteacher. “It is not working well in a class if the children cannot describe its impact on their learning when we talk with them!”

Working walls are now embedded in the school’s organisation for effective teaching, learning and assessment. They are used successfully from Reception to Year 6.

Developing a range of successful assessment for learning strategies, such as the working wall, has led to several other bonuses for the school.:

The school has transformed its



management of teaching into a participatory model of coaching. Senior leaders are now able to act quickly to support staff when this is needed.

The key structures of leadership have changed and middle leaders are more involved in improving the quality of teaching. They are the ones who often give staff meetings, sharing their expertise with other teachers.

“We like having practical staff meetings where the staff ‘do’ the learning, rather than listen to what is being described.” says the headteacher.

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