



LOOKING FOR
LEARNING

The Looking for Learning Toolkit



How schools are making themselves more learning-focused

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How more than 25 schools are improving learning and enjoying it!

Bransgore C.E. Primary School Christchurch, Dorset

"We (the staff) all recognised that we wanted to make the shift from looking at the teaching to looking at the learning that's going on in our school. I always felt very insecure about the monitoring of teaching; it just didn't seem right and the Looking for Learning process has turned this right on its head so that we are now monitoring the learning that's going on rather than the teaching and that makes so much sense.

"When we started out with the Looking for Learning Toolkit we asked ourselves the first question: 'what's our definition of learning' and we couldn't define it! We just didn't know what we were saying; we found it really hard to differentiate learning from teaching. I can tell you what teaching looks like but, at that point, I couldn't tell you what learning looked like; nor could anyone else on the staff.

"The Looking for Learning Toolkit is telling us everything we need to know about learning; how kids learn, what learning in action looks like, how to improve it. It's all right there for us in the Toolkit. The thinking behind the Looking for Learning Toolkit is phenomenal and as we pick away at it we're going deeper and deeper in understanding learning and how we can improve it.

"Every member of our staff is now observing. We've even had one of our senior teachers being observed by one of our NQTs. You'd have never heard of that in the past. Both teachers were very happy and confident in their roles; confident because they knew that the observation was not about your knowledge or experience of teaching, but confident that it was all about observing the learning and the Looking for Learning Toolkit gave us all the process and protocols we needed to achieve this and observe effectively. The questions the Toolkit recommends for observation are well thought out, searching questions. Even when friends are observing friends they are comfortable asking the questions because it's nothing personal; it's just about the learning. It doesn't matter what level or

experience of teacher you are, we're still looking for the learning. It's just fantastic; sensational.

"We have rewritten our Learning Policy and it's all come from the Looking for Learning Toolkit. The SEF criteria which focuses on the quality of pupils learning and progress, I couldn't have done that without the Looking for Learning Toolkit. It absolutely answers everything they want to know. I just summarised everything we were doing with the Looking for Learning Toolkit to answer it.

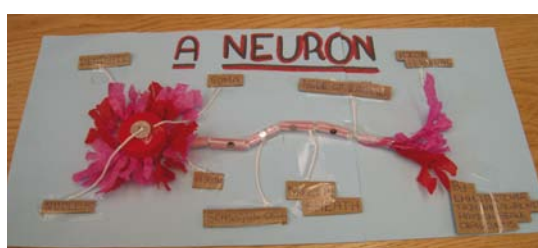
"We have lots coming at us; Howard Gardner, Guy Claxton, some really great thinking but we never really knew how to apply what they were saying. Now we know what to do with what they're telling us. The Looking for Learning Toolkit has given us the tools to turn their great thinking into practice.

"It really took us four days to get to grips with Looking for Learning thanks to the Toolkit. All the answers are in there, we've all realised that and that's very exciting for us as a school. The Looking for Learning Toolkit is very accessible to everyone. You can pick it up and put it down and pick it up again easily; it's very well written from that point of view.

"The Looking for Learning Toolkit is a huge success. It's having a measurable impact. In the past, I was insecure because I knew there was great quality learning going on but I couldn't prove it and I couldn't identify it to then develop on it. Now, as a result of the Looking for Learning Toolkit, I can. It's literally manna from heaven; there's nothing else like it. What it's done is given my team confidence of the learning that's going on in the school. Nothing else has ever done that before. It's the deepest thinking I've ever know; I'm knocked out by it."

Peter Pretlove

Headteacher, Bransgore C.E. Primary School,
Bransgore, Christchurch, Dorset



Woodlands Primary School

Leeds

“We bought into the Looking for Learning Toolkit at a time of revising our School Improvement Plan. **The Looking for Learning Toolkit came at exactly the right time for us.** We were at a point of asking ‘is personalised learning possible?’ We’ve turned ‘one size fits all’ totally on its head. The Looking for Learning Toolkit is helping us make the whole organisation fit for this purpose. **It’s helped us to radically overhaul our focus on learning, the way we view our teachers as learners too.**”

“This whole process has been a very gradual process for our teachers and everyone is really positive about it and it’s working really well. The learning-centred mindset was already there when we started working with the Looking for Learning Toolkit but what it has done is **help to significantly deepen that mindset.** We’ve changed the way we observe learning in the classrooms, using the Looking for Learning key questions that focus on the children and their learning rather than on the teaching. **The Looking for Learning Toolkit has helped us overhaul the way we structure our meetings, our evaluations and planning formats,** our staff training, our pedagogy and our systems and procedures so that we focus everything on the learning.

“In the early stages of the process, The Looking for Learning Toolkit was used as a leadership tool although the practical applications such as the observation techniques were immediately used right across the board. In the early stages we needed to make sure everyone got it and from that point of view, using **the Looking for Learning Toolkit as a leadership tool was very helpful.** It’s great.”

Chris Walton

Headteacher, Woodlands Primary School, Leeds

Warwickshire Cluster

In Warwickshire, there is a cluster of 25 primary schools using the Looking for Learning Toolkit driven by Senior Inspector for the Primary Team and Primary Strategy Manager for Warwickshire County Council, Sheila Dentith.

“The Looking for Learning Toolkit Project was introduced as a tool for Headteachers in Warwickshire to work in a collaborative way to look at learning in the classroom and to develop a greater understanding of what learning is. We chose the Looking for Learning Toolkit because **I haven’t found anything else that actually talks about learning in the way that this does.** It resonated with me, that this was going to be a tool that was really going to help the teachers to understand about learning and what learning is happening in the classroom, what they can do to help it and what they can do to increase and improve it.

“Ofsted inspectors are now spending ten minutes in class at the end of a lesson. They are looking for what learning has gone on in the lesson. They are not interested in what the teachers are doing so much any more so long as they can see that learning has been achieved. They’re looking at the outcomes. **This is where the Looking for Learning Toolkit is really helping to make a difference for our schools.**”

Sheila Dentith

Senior Inspector and Primary Strategy Manager, Warwickshire County Council

Here is what some of the Warwickshire cluster schools are saying about the Looking for Learning Toolkit:

"It's helping my teachers know they've got the learning bit right. One teacher wasn't giving the children enough time to consolidate their learning. It's slowed her teaching down, but it's having a real impact as a result."

"The classroom observation process of Looking for Learning takes the onus away from teaching. The pressure is still on but you're not looking at the teaching; you're looking at the learning that's happening. And it's building self-reflection amongst the teachers. They are now asking themselves things like 'what did I do that made that learning work?'"

"When I go into the classroom now, the children are saying things like 'what are we going to learn today?' The children are asking learning-focused questions. They quickly got the message about a language of learning."

"In our school we were paying lip-service to learning but we were planning and observing for teaching. The Looking for Learning Toolkit has changed our whole focus on learning so that we really understand how to recognise it when it's happening well and how to improve it."

"This is not an add-on; it has real purpose and is helping us to have a big view of where we are going long-term as a school."

"The Looking for Learning Toolkit is making my whole team work together; teaching and non-teaching staff. It's a very dynamic thing. They are beginning to know what to look for during observation. Year 1 teachers are observing year 3 teachers and are confident in being able to do that because they know all they have to do is look for the learning."

"Looking for Learning is giving us the chance to freely talk with no hidden agenda. It's so easy to be positive about this. It's helping with our planning because we know the focus is on learning. Three of us Headteachers (from the cluster) have shared a learning day which is the first time this has happened and, as a result, the schools are working together and we're really enjoying that. The children are using the learning terminology. We're doing a homework diary; providing parents with learning-focused questions to ask their children to try and improve dialogue about their learning at home. That's working particularly well; the shared vocabulary, the sharing of learning intentions and success criteria, parents knowing where the children are on their learning journey. It's empowering stuff."

"The challenge to put all the non-learning-focused stuff aside has been very good for us."

"The Looking for Learning Toolkit is very good for getting to know our children as individuals and the children have shared in our understanding and our drive towards their learning. There is a real team spirit among everyone; teachers and children and non-teaching staff. It's encouraging evaluation and reflection time by the teachers who are now more focused on the learning that's coming out of their lessons. There's no one that is not convinced by this. It's creating a climate where sharing expertise is possible. The Looking for Learning Toolkit has been the vehicle for this."

"The Looking for Learning Toolkit has brought to life what we've been trying to get our heads around as a school. The big thing is that it increases teachers' mindsets of what to do to make that change from teaching to learning; what to do is the important thing."

The Looking for Learning Toolkit is a cost-effective, practical, results-oriented leadership toolkit to help schools become focused on learning. It helps leaders take their school step-by-step through a process to becoming less teacher or activity-focused and instead, more learning-focused, not just in the classroom but in everything they do throughout the school.

The Looking for Learning Toolkit is full of ideas. You will find tried and tested ideas for turning meetings into learning-focused meetings, writing learning-focused targets, creating learning-

focused displays, leading learning-focused assemblies, preparing learning-focused reports and more. It will also show you step-by-step how to lead your staff into effectively observing, identifying and improving the amount of learning that is going on in every lesson in every classroom every day within your school.

To find out more about the Looking for Learning Toolkit or to talk to a school working with the Looking for Learning Toolkit call Preet Khukh at Fieldwork Education at **+44 (0)20 7531 9696** or email **preet@greatlearning.com**