**Creating a World-Class Education System:
Visible Learning in Midlothian**

**Report by Dr Grace Vickers, Head of Education, Education, Communities
and Economy**

1   Purpose of Report

Further to the Attainment report which was presented to Council on 17th May
2016, the purpose of this report is to provide a summary of progress with
Visible Learning in Midlothian Schools.

2.1   Background
The Visible Learning approach is based on the research of John Hattie
(2009). It supports schools and individual teachers to examine their evidence
of impact and make adjustments to their professional practice in relation to its
impact on the outcomes they seek. The development of Visible Learning in
Midlothian has been driven the Educational Psychology Service who have
placed learning at the heart of all their work.

2.2   The Research
Almost everything in education has a positive impact; 95% of what we do
works. John Hattie's driving question was 'what works best?' when it comes
to raising attainment. John Hattie has carried out a meta-analysis of the
research which allows us to understand the magnitude of the impact of
different influences.

2.3   Translating Research into Practice
The professional learning model provided by Visible Learning[Plus] consists of a
series of workshops that provide school leaders and teachers with the
knowledge and tools to engage with research and consider what works best
for their pupils.

2.4   Visible Learning in Midlothian
In August 2015 all primary teachers and representative from secondary
schools engaged in the Visible Learning[Plus] Foundation Day. This day outlined
the key research and messages relating to the five strands of Visible
Learning; developing assessment capable learners, effective feedback,
understanding impact and how it can be evaluated, the mindframes of highly
effective teachers.

School leaders then engaged in a two day programme (Evidence into Action)
which provided leaders with the tools to consider what is working and not
working in their schools. This information provided the foundation for
developing an action plan based on the findings. The Visible Learning[Plus]
programme provides a one size fits one approach with the framework of
Visible Learning providing a common framework across Midlothian Schools.

In May 67 teachers from 26 schools participated in the Visible Learning into
Action for Teachers programme. Over the two day programme teachers are
exploring how to use evidence from their class to understand the impact they
are having on our learners and what they can do to work smarter rather than
harder. The programme supports teachers to examine what is working best
and to make adjustments to practice in relation to its impact on the outcomes
they seek for their learners. This helps us shift the focus from "what works?"
to identifying "what works best?" in our classrooms.

In addition to the above, the Educational Psychology Service has engaged both support staff and newly qualified teachers in a programme of learning that compliments this. Both programmes have provided a strong model of professional learning maximising opportunities to ensure that this learning translates into practice and therefore has an impact for learners.

2.5   **Action**

Through the Evidence into Action programme schools have engaged in a systematic evidence gathering process within the strands of Visible Learning. This data has been used to develop baseline statements about where they are now. These have then been used to develop aspirational statements and identify focus areas that will help them to achieve their aspirations. In doing this they considered the knowledge and practice that teachers, leaders, learners and pupils need and how they will achieve this.

Most schools identified the need to start with a focus on developing assessment capable learners who can answer the three key questions of 'where am I?', 'where am I going?' and 'how will I get there?' Assessment capable learners are characterised by:

- Learning dispositions: being able to apply the effective habits of thinking and doing.
- Assessment capability: knowing where they are at, where they are going and what their next steps are.
- Understanding the learning process: having effective learning strategies and meta-cognitive skills.
- Effective feedback: seeking, receiving and acting on feedback.

The seminar on 20th June will involve four schools sharing the actions that have been taken and the impact these have had. Teachers and pupils from Roslin Primary, Lasswade Primary, Hawthornden Primary and St. David's High School will share the actions they have taken and impact this has had for pupils. This session will demonstrate how we have developed a language of learning, a culture of challenge (through growth mindset and the learning pit), pupils' ability to talk about their progress in their learning and developed pupil – teacher dialogue.

2.6   **Impact**

The focus on and impact of Visible Learning in Midlothian has been the focus of interest from Authorities across Scotland. In March we held a network day on which 50 colleagues from Scotland, England and Wales came together to visit six of our schools; Mayfield Nursery, Cuiken Primary, Penicuik High School, Lasswade Primary, Roslin Primary and Hawthornden Primary. This was a great opportunity for schools to get an external perspective on the impact Visible Learning is having on our learners. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with the following themes:

- <u>Assessment Capable Learners</u> – pupils have a language of learning and can talk about their learning; pupils can talk about their next steps in learning; there is a clear focus on learning and pupil voice is strong.
- <u>Effective Feedback</u> – there has been focus on establishing relational trust and a culture of collaboration as a foundation for effective feedback.
- <u>Know thy Impact</u> – schools have used research and evidence across the Visible Learning framework to inform action.
- <u>Inspired and Passionate Teachers</u> – teachers see themselves as learners and the community of professional learning is strong in which Visible Learning provides a shared language and framework for thinking about learning and impact.

Midlothian has presented workshops at both national and international conferences. Most recently we presented at the Visible Learning World conference in London in January. In recognition of the impact of Visible Learning Midlothian has been asked to co-host the first Scottish Visible Learning Conference in November. This will be held at Murrayfield Stadium due to the numbers involved and close proximity to national and international rail/airport links.

2.7 Next Steps

- Continue to measure the impact of Visible Learning with a focus on impact for pupils.
- Continue to provide high quality Visible Learning^{Plus} professional learning for teachers and support staff.
- Continue to develop the culture of collaboration across Midlothian Schools.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource
The Education Leadership Teams, all Head Teachers and staff are committed to developing Visible Learning in order to improve outcomes for all learners.

3.2 Risk
Addressing inequalities by closing the attainment gap is of significant importance in order to improve the life chances of children and young people in our care.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation
Themes addressed in this report:

☐ Community safety
☐ Adult health, care and housing
☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
☐ Sustainable growth
☐ Business transformation and Best Value
☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan
Girfec 5: Our people will be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes
To close the gap by improving 'attainment versus deprivation' and 'attainment for all' outcomes for children and young people.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders
School will continue to engage parents in their Visible Learning improvement journey in a variety of ways. Working with colleagues in Lifelong Learning and Employability will allow us to consolidate these links.

3.8   Ensuring Equalities
The recommendations is this report should continue to promote equity of attainment for disadvantaged children and support the steps being taken towards narrowing the attainment gap by imposing duties on education authorities and the Scottish Ministers in relation to reducing pupils' inequalities of educational outcome together with a duty to report on progress.

3.9   Supporting Sustainable Development
There are no impacts arising directly from this report

3.10   IT Issues
There are no IT issues arising from this report.

4   Recommendations

Council are requested to:

- Note the progress made in the development of Visible Learning across Midlothian schools.
- To approve the continued focus on developing Visible Learning with the appropriate professional learning opportunities for staff.
- To congratulate members of the Educational Psychology Service and Education team who presented at the Visible Learning World Conference.

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