

# Learning Ambassadors

## SSAT Conference

### December 2016



**Perschore** High School  
AN ACADEMY FOR 12-18 YEAR OLDS

# Introducing

**Clive Corbett, Headteacher, and Neil Harding, Learning Ambassador Co-ordinator.**

**A short film**

**Emmie Bewley and Hugh Jeavons, Learning Ambassadors.**



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# Teaching hamsters?

**Tom Bennett, the Behaviour Guru, writing in the TES –  
16<sup>th</sup> November 2016:**

**“I know as much about flying a jumbo jet as my pupils know about teaching, so why would they have any idea about whether I'm any good or not.”**

**“What insanity compels us to import this fool’s charter into schools?”**

**“Asking students to observe lessons? You may as well ask the class hamster what the best way to teach phonics is.”**



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# Before...

**Before PHS introduced its Learning Ambassador programme (a Schools of Tomorrow initiative), student views were always valued:**

- **Students were regularly surveyed in order to gather their opinions;**
- **Local Authority and OFSTED requirements underpinned what sort of questions students were asked;**
- **Governors met with students to discuss their ideas and views.**

## Improvements needed?

### OFSTED action points – July 2013

- Teachers checking students' understanding so that the students move on to new tasks when they are ready and not before.
- Students are given enough opportunities to discuss their learning during lessons.
- Teachers' marking and feedback are of consistently high quality so that students understand exactly what they need to do to improve.



## ...so why a new approach?

- Our school felt that much more could be achieved from student feedback, particularly concerning teaching and learning, which is of course central to their success.
- The school recognised that by *carefully* involving students in formally assessing teaching and giving immediate, direct feedback, higher standards and on-going improvement could be achieved.

The Learning Ambassador programme was introduced in November 2013.



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# Learning Ambassadors

- **Girls and boys from all year groups were recruited to become Learning Ambassadors (LAs). Numbers grew to 36: 16 girls, 20 boys.**
- **Teachers volunteered to have LAs observe, conduct interviews and give feedback about their lessons.**
- **Students recruited to be LAs needed to be trained carefully – to effectively relay their own observations, and the opinions of the students in the lesson.**
- **LAs aim to be sources of immediate, direct and confidential insight for teachers following an observed lesson.**

# Observing Lessons

**During a lesson students worked in pairs to observe various aspects of the learning. This included:**

## **General**

- **Time frame of the lesson, transitions and variety of activity;**
- **Layout of the classroom, and which students answered questions most frequently;**  
**Trying to find a correlation between seating and involvement, and between engagement and learning.**

## **Student specific**

- **Whether students understood what was expected of them – and what was done to ensure this;**
- **The quality of feedback given by teachers to students.**



# Informing teaching

## Learning Ambassadors Research Project – 'Student Researcher Information Collection'

Learning Ambassador:  
Subject / Time:  
School:  
Teacher / Staff:  
Start of the Lesson

Briefly sketch the **layout of the classroom** and indicate **student positioning** using B/G to indicate their gender.

Circle the B / G if the student makes a **verbal contribution** to the lesson.

Number of female students: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of male students: \_\_\_\_\_

### During the Lesson

How would you describe the atmosphere in the classroom?

How would you describe the learning environment (display / rooming)?

What were the key strengths of the learning taking place in this lesson

Are there any other comments you would like to make about your experience of this lesson?

Feedback      www      ebi

# Informing teaching

| List briefly the <b>activities</b> taking place during the lesson |                                       |                            |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>Time</u>   | <u>Activity – teacher/other staff</u> | <u>Activity – students</u> |
| 5 minutes   |                                       |                            |
| 10 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 15 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 20 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 25 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 30 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 35 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 40 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 45 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 50 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 55 minutes  |                                       |                            |
| 60 minutes  |                                       |                            |

# Informing teaching

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Every time a student makes a <b>verbal contribution</b> to the lesson, indicate their gender by indicating the responses in the form of a tally chart |                                  |
| Male verbal responses   | Female verbal responses          |
|   | -<br>-                           |
| Record each time the teacher <b>rewards and sanctions</b> the class, either as individuals or collectively, in the form of a tally chart              |                                  |
| Reward or Praise  | Sanction (or threat of sanction) |
|   |                                  |

# Interviews

- **LAs observed lessons and then interviewed some of the students during lunch times to get their opinions on the lesson.**
- **LAs also interviewed teachers and asked them to reflect upon the success of the lesson and areas they felt could be improved.**



# Reporting back

**After all of the observations and interviews were completed, Learning Ambassadors relayed their findings. This involved comparing teacher interviews with student opinions.**

**Feedback was then given specifically to the teacher. Then, general and anonymised information was passed to the co-ordinator and Mr Corbett.**

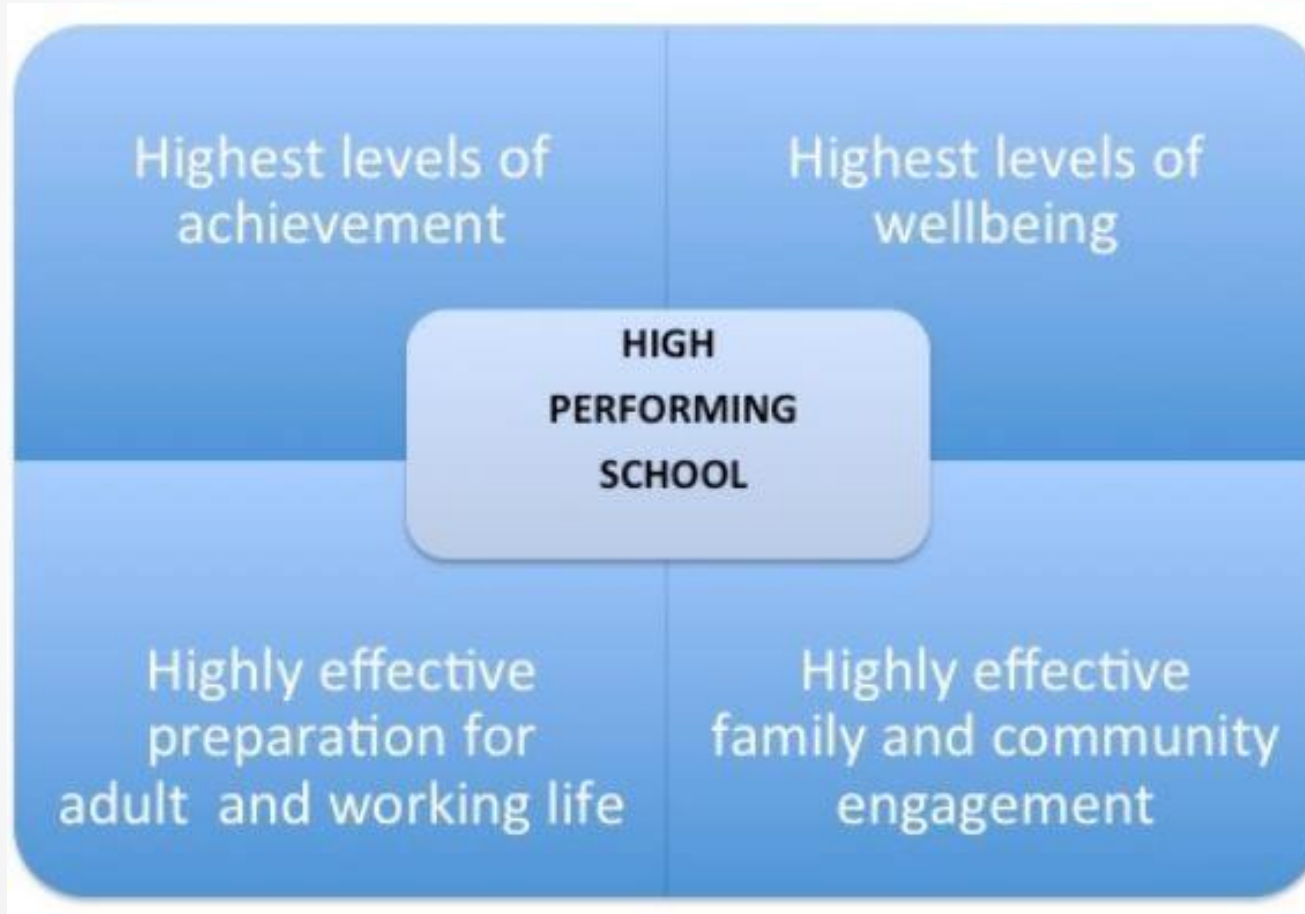


# Acting on findings

- **Acting on findings is mainly achieved when LAs discuss what they have found, directly, with the teacher after interviews are complete.**
- **Immediate improvements can be introduced by the teacher as a result of this one-to-one feedback.**
- **General information is then passed onto the leadership team and then to governors, which provides an overview of the changing picture of teaching and learning.**



# Schools of Tomorrow



# Student led research



# Student led research

## Research report 2

### Pershore High School

An academy for 12-18 year olds in Worcestershire

#### PROJECT LEADS

Emmie Bowley (Y10), Kacper Boniecki (Y9)

#### STAFF FACILITATOR

Dean Morrok

The learning ambassadors at Pershore, through the Schools of Tomorrow project, wanted to identify the level of challenge that occurs in the classroom. This was to follow on from and complement their work in the classroom.

A survey was put together to establish how challenged students felt in lessons. From the first survey, over 22% of students responded that they didn't feel sufficiently challenged. Together with this, 71% of students said they felt that the challenge was just right. However, it was felt that we needed to dig deeper below these general responses in order to establish whether students were being challenged in all of their lessons.

The learning ambassadors wanted to understand where students felt they were not being challenged. For this reason, a second survey was conducted with a question inserted that allowed students to highlight the lessons where they did not feel challenged.

The results of the surveys are displayed on the next pages.



# Impact on the school

- **LAs are a useful and increasingly valued source of feedback for teachers trying to improve the quality of lessons.**
- **Their work also has a significant impact on the attitudes of students.**
- **Students increasingly perceive that they own their own learning. They are in partnership with teachers to improve their learning.**
- **It has become legitimate for students to have opinions and to voice them in a professional manner with their teachers – through LAs, but also directly.**
- **Students have a real voice and are being empowered and expected to contribute to how lessons can be improved – this is a clear advantage of the programme.**
- **It contributes to a culture of co-operation and open discussion.**



## Building on our success

- Due to the success of the scheme, the number of teachers being observed has risen from 7 to 30+ across all departments.
- We are continuing to increase the number of teachers taking advantage of the programme – teacher demand is naturally increasing as the value of LA feedback becomes more widely recognised. We seek to share LA findings with all teachers.
- During the academic year every department will utilise the LAs to help inform curriculum delivery.
- We will continue to develop a culture of teacher acceptance of constructive criticism from pupils.



# Future plans

- **Recruit and train increasing numbers of LAs to cater for increasing demand from teachers for their feedback.**
- **Advertise and undertake formal interviews for prospective LAs. Since there is significant student demand for these prestigious posts, we will select the best/strongest candidates – good for their CV.**
- **Ensure LAs include and interview all abilities/groups of students to provide a representative balance of feedback.**
- **Regularly review the core objective of LAs work - to focus upon the level of challenge in lessons and the key improvements required. This has been identified through LA's observations, and a subsequent questionnaire completed by all year groups.**
- **Review questions being asked by LAs as lesson improvements are made.**
- **Share our experiences with other schools, and learn from them.**



# Practical activity

- A short clip from Teachers TV of a History lesson.
- Look at the LA paperwork – Student led research.
- Emmie and Hugh will now demonstrate what feedback a LA would be likely to give to the teacher and the protocols that have to be observed.

# Practical activity

Learning Ambassadors Research Project – 'Participating Student Reflection'

Learning Ambassador:

Subject / Time:

School:

Teacher:

How would you describe the atmosphere in your lesson?

i) What did you learn during your lesson? (Beyond what you knew already)

ii) What helped you to learn that? (If applicable) (www)

Do you feel all your classmates were challenged? (Please give reasons for your opinion)

How could the level of challenge been increased to help you learn more? (ebi)

Do you feel the lesson moved at a pace when you ready to go onto the next step?

If yes – How do you feel the teacher knew?

If no – What do you feel the teacher should look out for next time?

Do you feel you were provided with sufficient time to discuss your learning?

How do you feel your teacher shares with you the key areas you need to improve?

**And finally ....**

Are there any other comments you would like to make about your experience of this lesson?

# Any questions?



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