Collaborative school improvement through peer review

Dr David Godfrey
Today’s talk

1. The role of school peer review in school collaborative improvement
2. Research on school peer review
3. Research-informed peer review (RiPR)
Choosing the right drivers for change

- Accountability within the profession (internal/ shared accountability)
- Real autonomy: Criteria Power – not just operational power
1. The role of school peer review
Building blocks of a self-improving system

- Clusters of schools (structure)
- The local solutions approach and co-construction (culture)
- System leaders (key people)

(Hargreaves, 2012)
2. Research on school peer review
Empirical studies of peer review

- Case study of a primary school peer review cluster as part of an EU study into Polycentric Inspections
- Evaluation of EDT’s Schools Partnership Programme (EEF)
- Introduction of peer review in Bulgaria and Chile
- Research-informed peer review in English schools (RiPR)
Books

Godfrey, D Ed. (2019)
“School peer review for educational improvement and accountability: Theory, practice and policy implications.”
EU-funded study Polycentric Inspections of Networks of Schools

4 countries/regions: England, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Bulgaria

England:

Study of MATs going through focused inspections
Study of a peer review cluster

http://www.schoolinspections.eu/
Across Europe, Inspectorates of Education are developing new inspection methods and modalities that fit a more decentralized education system. In such systems, schools and other service providers operate in networks to provide inclusive education or develop and implement more localized school-to-school improvement models.

As some education systems move towards more decentralized decision-making where multiple actors have an active role in steering and governing schools, the tasks and responsibilities of Inspectorates of Education also change.

This project reflects on these changes and suggests 'polycentric' inspection models that fit such a decentralized context. Examples of inspection frameworks and methods from Northern Ireland, England, the Netherlands and Bulgaria are described and the impact of these models on improvement of schools and

http://www.schoolinspections.eu/
Peer review case study

Headteachers from 3 primary schools
Self-selected cluster

Geographically close (ish) – they have not traditionally worked together

Own framework for self-evaluation (not Ofsted)

Each school is visited and reviewed once (2 days) around agreed focus

Lead Reviewer coordinates and sends out final report (agreed with participants)
Research questions

What was the impact of the peer review network on the participating Headteachers, their schools and on the other local networks that the schools belonged to?

What is the interplay between the peer review, the self-evaluation and school inspections?
### Sample: Summary details of schools involved in the peer review cluster case study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Headteacher and date of appointment</th>
<th>Local Authority area</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
<th>Most recent Ofsted grade and date</th>
<th>Date of Instead review visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
## Data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Prior to self-evaluation, peer review/inspection</th>
<th>3-4 months after peer review/inspection</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current evaluation practices (internal evaluation, peer review, inspections of both single schools and the network)</strong></td>
<td>Interviews with school staff, (internal/peer) reviewers/evaluators (and inspectors).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current improvement practices (school-based, network-oriented)</strong></td>
<td>Interview with Lead Reviewer (from outside the cluster)</td>
<td>Interview with Lead Reviewer (from outside the cluster)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships and structure of the network</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Network-level outcomes (e.g. sharing resources, joint CPD)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Potential dysfunctional effects (transition costs)</strong></td>
<td>Data and document analyses (e.g. inspection reports, performance data, self-evaluation/peer review reports, school improvement plan, email communications)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Relationships, collaboration and structure of the network

• There was a high level of trust between the heads of the schools and that this had been helped by getting to know each other in the two earlier meetings before the first review.
• They shared a similar ‘agenda’ and values.
• There was two way discussion and dialogue and recipient schools were able to freely ask advice of the other Heads.
• There was no hierarchy, competition or dominance by one single contributor to the review.
• There was a lot of mutual respect, particularly recognition for their shared experience. Ross described this as ‘over 50 years’ of shared experience among the Heads.
• The review was ultimately driven by the best interests of the children.
Evaluation practices in the reviews

• Methodology for the reviews
• Involvement of ‘users’ in the review
• Valuing and Judging
• Comparisons to Ofsted Inspections
Methodology of the reviews: evaluation practices

“Yeah, so there is a very strong pupil voice, but policies? No. And we sat and we kept going back to it, didn’t we, and in the end we decided actually it’s gonna [sic] have to stay on the left hand side of the paper because we decided that’s not important for us. But we have considered it. We hadn’t thought about it before, and we’ve gone back to it and said actually that’s not important for us, we are not going to do it, but at least we thought about it now.” (Alice, Headteacher, Holy Primary)
User involvement

“the real value [of the peer review] was the lead up to it, and the discussion, the analysis, beforehand.” (Evelyn, Greenleigh Primary).
Valuing and Judging

• “early years provision looked different to theirs, and we know early years is an area we’ve been working on, but you can’t keep saying oh at my school we’ve got this. You can’t do that, you’ve got to look objectively and not compare it to your own school. So there was quite a bit of that.” (Mariana, Assistant Headteacher, Holy Primary)

• “it was a very good confirmation that we know our school.” (Adrian, Holy Primary)
Comparisons to Ofsted Inspections

• “if I was an Ofsted inspector the school would be at least good with outstanding features, and you are so far from outstanding, and these are the things you would need to do. So they were talking in those terms.” (Shaun at Greenleigh Primary)
The interplay between peer review, self-evaluation and Ofsted

“Although I’ve said I wanted to use the interviews as Ofsted prep [sic] I wasn’t relating it back to Ofsted. And we didn’t really talk about Ofsted descriptors, or Ofsted categories. Although if you get four headteachers together I don’t think it’s long before Ofsted gets mentioned.”
The Panopticon

Impact of the peer review at school level

- Excellent leadership preparation for middle and senior leaders as well as Headteachers
- Changes to the structure of leadership teams
- Further training towards qualifications for senior leaders and mentoring for others
- Keeping of further data (case studies) to evidence strategies employed with vulnerable students
- Changes to marking and assessment systems/policies
- Improving monitoring of the impact of strategies for pupil premium students
- Improving the use of data systems by all staff
- Evidencing how the curriculum differentiates for learners at each end of the achievement scale
Potential for network level effects?

- Networks set up for long term collaboration
- Geography
- Involving more than just Heads
- High trust and credibility
3. Research-informed peer review (RiPR)

• engagement with academic research (around an agreed topic*) and
• A process of evaluation and implementing change that is informed by research.
• Mutual school visits to gather evidence, scrutinise and share school pedagogical practices.
• Visits use enquiry tools (e.g. collecting evidence of effective feedback use based on the research literature)

The pilot started with a summary of evidence on effective feedback*

Overview of the process

Workshop 1: Understanding the research literature and apply to context

Workshop 2: Develop tools, arrange visits and agree scope

Between sessions: Apply learning and action points from review visit to own school

Int. sess. 1: Initial self-evaluation/baseline

Review visit 1 and action points

Review visit 2 and action points

Review visit 3 and action points

Workshop 3: Take stock, evaluate impact, plan for change and sustainability
Joint Practice Development

‘digging deeper, digging together’
Change = a shift from state A to state B (neutral, worse, better)

Improvement = connotation of better
Change vs Improvement

The distinction is important because it requires an explicitly normative stance.

Increases accountability of leader to justify the need for improvement.

Requires a theory of improvement.
Theories of action

“a) the values and associated beliefs that explain
b) the observed actions and
c) the intended and unintended consequences of those actions”

Model making to reveal theories of action
Impact of the theory of action concept – explicit values

- Feedback should be MEANINGFUL, MANAGEABLE AND MOTIVATING. At X Primary we are aiming:
  - to develop the self-regulation and independence of learners; taking ownership of their learning and making improvements
  - to communicate effectively with all learners to enable them to make improvements, ensuring all learners understand their feedback in the context of the wider learning journey
  - for all learners to take pride on their work
  - to ensure all feedback is given that is needs driven and personalised
  - to ensure that feedback is only given when useful. Constant feedback is less effective than targeted
  - to raise self-esteem and motivate learners
Impact of the theory of action concept – evidence-informed

- **Feedback Tasks** - Provides cues, strategies and processes to work on the task
- **Feedback Tasks** – Questions are given to promote reasoning/thinking
- **Feedback Tasks** - Sharing of key vocabulary/word banks
- **Feedback Regulatory** - Development of self-regulation and error detection skills- can children check their work and are they being encouraged to develop independence to do this?
- **Feedback Regulatory**- Self- assessment and self-evaluation – are children reviewing where they are in relation to goals set, strategies they have used?
- **Feedback Processes** - Modelling the process
- **Feedback Processes** - Scaffolding the learning process
- **Feedback Processes** - Focus on correct responses of children – are adults addressing misconceptions and giving further instruction and information?
The four phases of theory engagement

Phase I: Agree on the problem to be solved

Phase II: Reveal the relevant theory or theories in action

Phase III: Evaluate the relative merit of the current and alternative theories in action

Phase IV: Implement and monitor a new sufficiently shared theory
A. Engaging teachers’ theory of action

- Leader’s change agenda
- Leader’s alternative theory of action
- Teacher’s theory of action
- Agreed interim evaluation of each theory
- Joint decision to change
- Joint decision not to change

B. Bypassing teachers’ theory of action

- Leader’s change agenda
- Leader’s alternative theory of action
- Teacher’s theory of action
- No agreed evaluation of either theory
- Teacher complies with or resists leader’s theory
- Teacher adapts to leader’s theory
“RiPR has been transformative for us”
Bob Drew, Headteacher Gearies School

“It’s about as challenging as it gets”
Kulvarn Atwal, Headteacher Highlands Primary School

http://www.lcll.org.uk/research-informed-peer-review.html
References


Munby, S., & Fullan, M. (2016). Inside-out and downside-up. How leading from the middle has the power to transform education systems.


Lideres Educativos interim report (2019):
Centros Escolares que Indagan y Aprenden Juntos (CIAJ) Chile

Principales hallazgos

Escaso uso de retroalimentación en el aula – ausencia de un vocabulario compartido sobre qué se entiende por retroalimentación

Monitoreo global y general al curso en vez de retroalimentación específica y particular para el aprendiz

La retroalimentación como un evento aislado no como un proceso sistémico - no forma parte del diseño de la clase

La retroalimentación entendida como elogios o indicación correctiva

De carácter principalmente oral

Sub-utilización de los pares como agentes de retroalimentación

Metas de aprendizaje y tareas en el aula poco desafiantes que evidencian creencias sobre la capacidad de aprendizaje de sus estudiantes
Principales hallazgos

Falta de claridad en el desarrollo de actividades de aprendizaje con indicadores de éxito específico que permitan una retroalimentación efectiva de la tarea y proceso

- Escasa retroalimentación a las respuestas dadas por los estudiantes
- Uso poco frecuente de retroalimentación de proceso y auto-regulación

- Clases centradas en el protagonismo del docente
- Percepción de los docentes de falta de tiempo para desarrollar retroalimentación, como si no fuera parte de la actividad de aprendizaje
- Asociación de la retroalimentación con los resultados de instrumentos de evaluación (corrección de correcto o incorrecto) y con la conducta
Algunos ejemplos

• “...poco el tiempo en que el grupo pudo trabajar en conjunto y ella (docente) paso por cada uno de los grupos, pero los comentarios en cada uno de los grupos eran ¿qué están haciendo? Ya ahora háganlo ¿en qué están? Ya ahora háganlo y en todos los grupos repetía el mismo ejercicio y eso probablemente no les ayudaba mucho a las estudiantes poder hacerlo distinto digamos, para poder generar alguna reflexión distinta” (plenario observaciones de clases)

• “Cuando los niños comentaban ella les decía !bien, súper!, no hubo una retroalimentación más profunda, la mayor parte fueron elogios, que bonito, bien chiquitita” (notas de campo).

• “la profesora dice muy bien! eso es!, pero no explicó el por qué, no aprovecho de dar las características del texto, solamente decía bien cuando estaba correcto” (notas de campo).