

FIELDWORK EDUCATION SERVICES

LEARNING-FOCUSED ACCREDITATION

at

Piasau School, Miri, Malaysia

Introduction

In January 2007, Piasau School was reviewed as part of the three-year rolling programme for the review of Shell Schools. The review team consisted of three people: one from Fieldwork Education Services, one from Stichting NOB and one who does not normally work with Fieldwork Education Services, Stichting NOB or Shell Schools.

The school took the opportunity of the review to apply for 'learning-focused accreditation' through Fieldwork Education Services.

Why is learning-focused accreditation important?

Learning-focused accreditation provides a means by which a school can demonstrate publicly that its commitment to learning – indicated through mission and vision statements, school improvement plans, brochures and more – is practically demonstrated in the classroom.

There are very many aspects to school life. These include the teaching, the organisation, the resources, the building and site, the displays, the documentation, the after-school activities and so on. These are all important but the actual learning that takes place is more important than any of them.

The quality and quantity of learning taking place in a school represent the core business of everything a school does. They are of concern to children and students, their parents, the leadership and management of schools, school boards and governing bodies and teachers themselves. This means that evidence about the quality and quantity of learning is the most important evidence a school can produce.

Uniquely, learning-focused education from Fieldwork Education Services is purely about learning. It is not an accreditation of all the other features of the school except in the extent to which they promote or hinder learning.

A learning-focused school

A school accredited by Fieldwork Education Services as learning-focused:

- Is focused on learning
- Has consistent and successful approaches to the promotion of learning
- Evaluates its own performance
- Sets itself challenging but realistic targets for the improvement of learning
- Is subject to external review

Our definition of learning

Learning takes place when children and students

- learn more knowledge and skills and begin to develop their understanding
- consolidate their knowledge and skills and the development of their understanding

The six key questions

In deciding whether a school can be accredited as learning-focused the review team pays close attention to six key questions. These are:

- Is learning taking place in this classroom?
- Is the learning appropriate?
- Is the learning sufficient?
- What are teachers doing to enhance the quality and quantity of learning?
- How does the school support teachers in their task of enhancing the quality and quantity of learning?
- How well does the school evaluate its own performance and use its self-evaluation to inform future action?

The team has to be satisfied that the school meets consistently high standards in relation to all six of these questions before it confirms accreditation.

Accreditation

Schools that meet the necessary criteria are able to use the words 'Accredited by Fieldwork Education Services as a learning-focused school' for a period of three years following the accreditation. They receive a certificate of accreditation and are able to use an accreditation logo in their brochures, websites and so on, and on their headed paper.

Schools applying for learning-focused accreditation will, following a review,

- Be granted full accreditation at 'Mastering' level, or
- Be granted accreditation at 'Developing' level, or
- Be granted provisional accreditation which can be upgraded to full accreditation at 'Mastering' level or accreditation at 'Developing' level on submission of an action plan and/or further documentary evidence, or
- Be granted provisional accreditation which can be upgraded to full accreditation at 'Mastering' level or accreditation at 'Developing' level after a successful follow-up visit, or
- Be denied accreditation

The accreditation of Piasau School

Following the review of Piasau School the review team produced a professional report for the school and a summary report for parents. In addition, the team leader made a statement about the school's application for accreditation. This statement said that:

'The review team judge that Piasau be granted learning-focused accreditation at mastering level. This award will be confirmed when the school produces a school improvement plan with targets written so that the success will be measured by impact on learning rather than on what is provided'

Subsequently the school has produced a school improvement plan for 2007-2008 with clear targets written in such a way that success in achieving these targets can be measured in terms of their impact on learning.

I am therefore pleased to confirm that Piasau School has been awarded learning-focused accreditation at mastering level. This accreditation remains valid for a period of three years from this date.

Graham Reeves
Director, Fieldwork Education Services
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