



The
IGUANA Project
Improving Education Together

IGUANA LEARNING PROGRAMME

Schools Peer Review

MODULE	Organisational Intelligence
SUB-MODULE	IGUANA Schools Peer Review Programme
VERSION	1
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1. Introduction to a school peer review programme.

The peer review programme involves a number of schools working together on specific themes in relation to the work they are undertaking as part of the IGUANA programme. Peers act as 'critical friends' to each other. That is to say, the critical friend is an advocate for the success of the work but also provides constructive questioning to examine learning more deeply.

This kind of peer learning is very helpful for the schools to benchmark their learning with that of other schools. This does not involve performance appraisal, it is more a method to draw out learning for the purposes of comparison and extension.

It is anticipated that schools take it in turn to have the focus on their work. In this way, one school can use the opportunity to deepen their work with two or three critical friends from one or two other schools providing the peer review aspect.

Overall the **purposes** of the peer review are to facilitate learning across the boundary of the individual school system. This will:

- Build on the theory of change maps to provide a structured conceptualisation of their work which will help schools to further define where to target their change plan.
- Allow schools to use the support and challenge of critical friends as a way to further developing success criteria and challenge underlying assumptions

within each school to improve the implementation and outcomes of their change plan.

- Allow schools to act as 'critical friends' to each other, by reviewing what a school has done in the light of their own experience and ask questions as to why the approach under examination was taken
- Broaden the range of experiences and activities that are available to participating schools, by seeing what others have done in similar or related circumstances.
- Provide participating authorities the opportunity to test ideas and implement changes to their Prevent activities / programme as these progress.
- Create an evaluation culture: building evaluation into programme design so that it is perceived as an essential tool for managing the programme and helping it to adapt to local conditions within a dynamic environment.
- Generate data that will provide a useful foundation for the future development of the IGUANA programme.

If possible these are best undertaken face to face with work being undertaken prior to the day. If face to face work is not possible, then it is feasible to manage the review programme by Skype or equivalent.

By bringing together a number of schools to work on common issues, this programme of peer reviews and network meetings provides a cost efficient method of learning and dissemination. It also has the additional benefits, outlined above.

2 The Peer Review process: overall approach and proposed activities

2.1 Peer Review groups, criteria for working together

Each school should aim to work with at least one other school and possibly two. We understand there might be a language barrier so suggest that this is one of the first criteria for selection. Other criteria might be

- Interest in particular themes or issues that were highlighted during the assessment phase and which schools have opted to pursue further. This provides a forum to develop shared understanding of the challenges and how to work with them.
- Interest in very different themes and issues, so as to broaden knowledge of the application of the ideas or draw to the attention of a school an element they might have missed.

The themes could be negotiated on the community hub.

The number of times the school meet either face to face or virtually could be negotiated, but it is anticipated that they meet twice during the duration of the programme so that they have an opportunity to witness and review progress made by themselves and by others. Learning could also be shared more broadly amongst the full cohort of participating schools through the community hub.

The way it is anticipated the schools convene themselves is to focus on one school at a session, say a half or whole day, where possible.

2.2 Peer Review groups, membership

We suggest that a peer review session focuses on one school. They will provide a broad set of stakeholders who explain and review current work. If face to face the number of these could be up to 15-20. If not face to face it is likely to be a smaller number of people.

The peer reviewers, from one or two other schools, is a much smaller group and would number two or three per school. They would be selected in accordance with the theme, but are likely to include a member or the senior leadership team and school Governor.

Schools may therefore select for themselves who is to participate in the activity. We suggest that they are drawn from drawn from those working in the action learning sets. They could therefore include Governors, the senior and middle leadership team, front line teachers and where appropriate students. This is also an opportunity to expand the stakeholder team and include those with an interest but have to date been less central in the work.

2.3 Activities

Activity 1: Preparation

In order to gain maximum benefit from the process, it should include an element of preparation and review work.

The aim of this initial work is to allow Peers to begin articulating their local context to another location and show them how they have approached IGUANA. This is so that reviewing peers understand the key issues identified.

Preparation activities prior to the first meeting:

- Situational analysis exercise: What is it like where you are – the local context key drivers for change and innovation, what are your key issues as a school, what are the governance arrangements and links with the school?
- What does success look like? From the situational analysis, and from the Theory of Change plan, what would impacts and outcomes look like and how would the school achieve them? A checklist of success criteria could be

developed and evidence could be gathered about whether or not these were achieved over time.

Activity 2: Peer reviews (Round 1)

A peer review day/session: schools would come together in their respective groups and the day will include:

- Host school to explore the **local context:** based on the preparation work done, Peers will very briefly present their local Iguana 'story'. The group will then test assumptions and approaches, as experienced by different stakeholders by asking for points of clarification, further questions (why did you choose this?)
- **Thematic sessions:** working in sub-groups and using the success criteria which were identified before the session, participants would explore the impact of work on school in the different areas, following up the Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Intelligence learning programme.

Peer reviewers participate in these sessions and ask questions for clarification and understanding and extend the peer reviewed school's learning.

(One way to work is to use an exercise in order to map the pathways to success and this also helps the development of an underpinning set of 'hypotheses' about 'what works' and how to evidence it, which would be tested throughout the course of the programme).

- **Peer reviewer session:** where peer reviewers recount to the host school what they have identified and what they have seen that is similar or different to their own practice. They offer questions or suggestions for further development. Review should be constructive and helpful.
- **Host school to respond** and identify immediate thoughts as to what they make take from this.
- **Review.**

Activity 3: Intermediate review and short report

This activity is intended as a brief review and report back on the day and the learning derived from each school. It could take the form of a narrative account, and also provide detail from the different sessions.

This would be posted on the Community Hub so that all participating schools could benefit from the peer review process in some way.

Activity 4: Peer review Round 2: review and assess the work undertaken

The design of the second review day would again be a collaborative process between the participating schools. We could expect though, that the schools revisit the themes and activities presented in the first round, review their progress and assess the learning derived from them together. It would include prior work as before and a sense-making session and other activities to be determined with the support of the Iguana team.

Activity 5: IGUANA synthesis, analysis and reporting

This activity would involve combining the findings from all the workshops to draw some conclusions on lessons being learned locally; themes around what is working / is not working in terms of delivering the IGUANA programme and in defining what success may look like.

Optional outputs:

- Short local narratives about the local approaches to delivering this IGUANA programme, including key assumptions about the local context, what areas the school undertook their innovation in and their capacity to change and how to change.
- A product of the work could be a final report drawing out and providing a synthesis of the learning from all participating areas. We will draw overarching conclusions about what constitutes a successful intervention, and the impact of the intervention. We will offer suggestions on how to measure success and where to gather data building on our earlier evaluation guidelines.

3 Peer Review model

Figure 1 gives a visual illustration of how we envisage the Peer Review programme to work.

Figure 1 IGUANA Peer Review model, an example



