

Research-Informed Peer Review (RiPR):

What is it?

RiPR involves school to school visits to gather and scrutinise evidence, share pedagogical practices and identify improvement action points.

The approach is based around the principles of effective peer review but enhanced by additional engagement with academic research and an H.E. facilitator.

Unlike other forms of peer review, RiPR is not a 'mocksted'; it is Joint Practice Development of a specific pedagogical issue.

The approach is informed by work at the London Centre for Leadership in Learning (LCLL) on Research Learning Communities (RLCs), research-engaged schools, peer review and Lesson Study.

The process is underpinned by evidence of effective evaluation, change management and knowledge mobilisation and begins by engagement with the research literature around a shared pedagogical issue.

Who benefits from RiPR?

Primarily the focus is on improving pupils' learning through improved pedagogy and knowledge of how to implement changes to this.

School leadership improves through effective collaboration and engagement with research.

The school's policies, teaching and learning practices and self-evaluation processes can all benefit from RiPR.

The RiPR process emphasises strategies to extend learning and sustain improvements well beyond the duration of the project.

Why RiPR and what is the evidence behind this?

Encouraging engagement with school self-evaluation driven by engagement with the research, can lead to a more rigorous focus on the pedagogical practices that are likely to lead to improved outcomes for students (Mincu 2013).

Peer review is also a good way to empower schools to define issues in ways that are deemed most relevant to their own context, a hallmark of the self-improving system (Hargreaves 2010).

Peer reviews can also provide the professional challenge needed to improve through collaboration (Matthews and Headon 2015).

The additional input in RiPR from a university-based academic source has also been shown to add effective critical friendship to school improvement initiatives (Swaffield and MacBeath 2005).

Schools in England now work in multiple partnerships, including Teaching School Alliances, Multi-Academy Trusts, Peer review networks and other loose groupings or federations of schools. Therefore, there has become a need to establish robust and rigorous processes for schools to work together, based on established research informed principles for improving learning and leading change (Brown 2015).

What does it involve?

Over one school year, each RiPR team focuses on an area in the research evidence that shows promise of high impact on student outcomes. The first cycle will focus on the characteristics of effective feedback.

A series of workshops led by an H.E. Facilitator and school peer review visits, working in clusters of three schools. Sessions would be attended by senior/middle leaders (2) from each school.

The first session begins by examining evidence on approaches to effective feedback with a customised review of the literature. This is followed by a self-evaluation in relation to the evidence.

In workshop two participants design data collection tools, including lesson observations sheets, interviews for staff and students and criteria for document analysis.

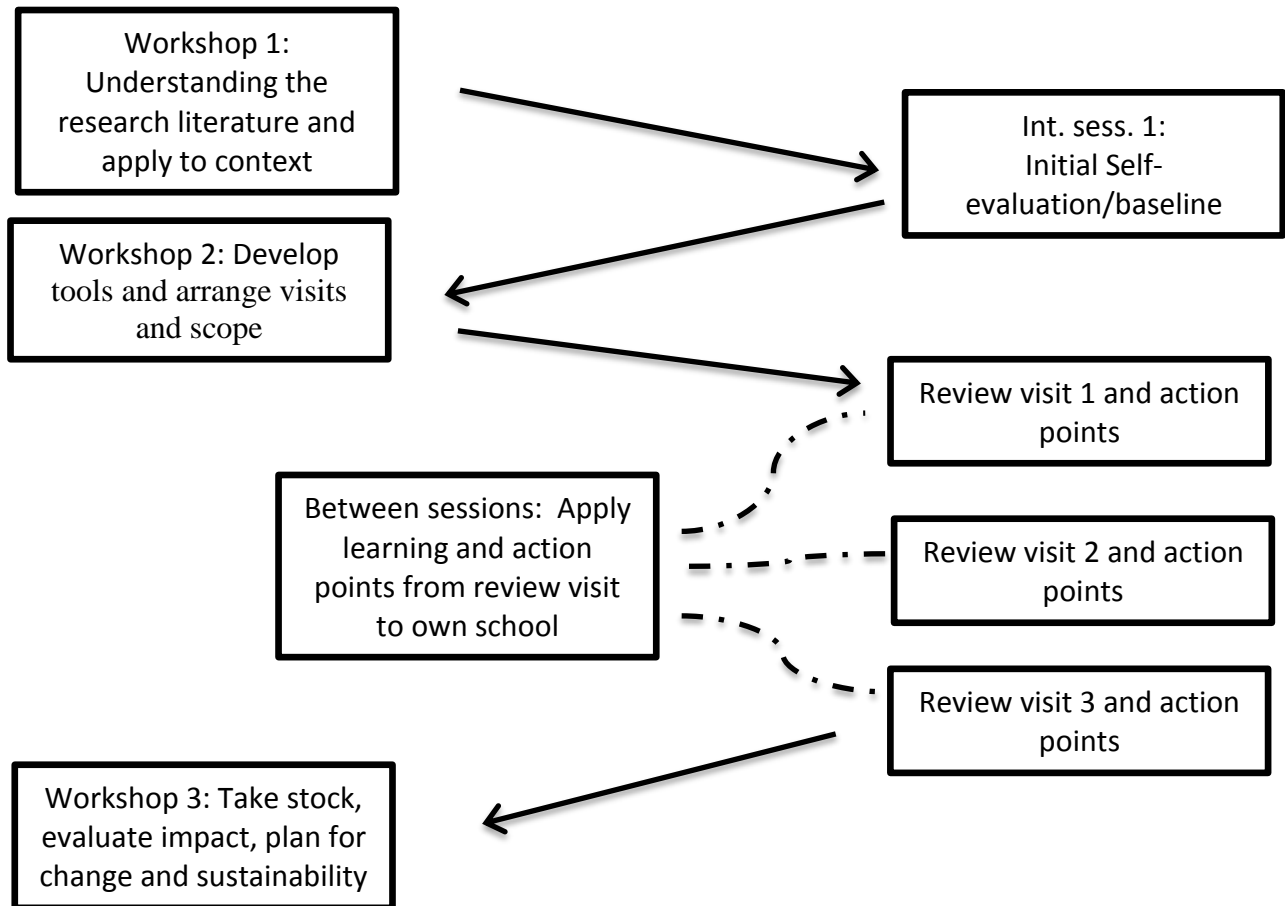
The extent to which approaches have been successfully implemented would be reviewed by each school, based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall and Hord 2006).

Each visit, and preparation for the visit, focuses on the school's work in relation to this theme and includes lesson observations; interviews with staff and students, work scrutiny and policy analysis.

Learning and action points from each review visit are for both host schools and visiting reviewers.

Each new visit leads to increased and deepened learning around the issue and how to improve and sustain practices in the participating schools.

Flow chart of workshops and review visit pattern



Suggested time-line:

Workshop 1: Early October

Workshop 2: December

Review visit 1: Jan/Feb

Review visit 2: March/April

Review visit 3: May/June

Workshop 3: Late June/early July

Who will it involve?

RIPR is ideal leadership development for middle or senior leaders, as it involves coming to grips with research evidence, engaging in collaborative professional discussion and reviewing practices in other schools.

Headteacher involvement and strong support and backing is essential and will ensure greater impact

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