

**LESSON OBSERVATION PROTOCOL**

**February 2021**

**Observation of Teaching, Learning and Progress Policy**

**Policy and Procedures**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Lesson observation is an integral part of Quality Assurance and Self Assessment. It is a key factor to support continuous improvement in the delivery of the curriculum through quality teaching and learning.

**2. AIM**

Within the College’s culture of self evaluation and support for staff, this policy and code of practice seeks to provide the highest standard of learning experience for all learners.

**3. OBJECTIVES**

It is important that all aspects of the observation process are understood and endorsed by all staff. The process is designed:

* To develop and improve teaching and learning
* To identify and acknowledge good practice and ensure that this is shared
* To evaluate the experience of the learners
* To measure standards of teaching and learning in order to enable national comparisons
* To inform the self-assessment process
* To support the assessment of leadership and management at curriculum area level
* To identify team and individual staff development needs

**4. HEADTEACHER’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This policy recognizes the rights and responsibilities of the head teacher, or any agent directed by the head teacher including the Governing Body, to observe any lesson at any time as part of their normal duties and statutory requirements.

Head teachers have a requirement to be satisfied as to the quality of teaching & learning, the effectiveness of the management of health and safety, and reassurance as to the well-being of staff and students. The National Standards for Headteachers requires that the headteacher establishes: ‘an educational culture of ‘open classrooms’ as a basis for sharing best practice’ and ‘rigorous, fair and transparent systems and measures for managing the performance of all staff, addressing any under-performance, supporting staff to improve and valuing excellent practice.’ (National Standards for Head teachers 2015).

**5. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

There are two statutory requirements which require school governing bodies and head teachers to organize lesson observation. These are:

* As part of their responsibilities to carry out appraisal policies determined by school governing bodies, head teachers are required to ensure that classroom observation arrangements, established by a classroom observation protocol, are in place.
* Head teachers are required by the School teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document to put in place arrangement for the evaluation of standards of teaching and learning in their schools.

**6. CONTEXT**

Teaching is observed for a variety of purposes, including: School Self-Evaluation, Newly Qualified Teacher Status, Appraisal etc.

The headteacher needs to be able to comment confidently on the quality of learning and teaching.

The College advocates the view that the sharing of good practice is pivotal in the development and improvement of all professionals.

Where observations are identified as being a cause for concern, colleagues are supported by a Pathway Action Plan. The plan involves coaching and monitoring of teaching and learning as part of the college’s improvement strategy.

**7. FREQUENCY OF OBSERVATIONS**

SLT will monitor levels of lesson observation to ensure that no individual teacher is overburdened, but to ensure that there are a reasonable number of observations, within the context of either individual performance, Subject review or other Self-Evaluation processes.

**8. PURPOSE AND FORMAT OF OBSERVATIONS**

For each observation, the observer should:

1. Establish the purpose, length and focus of the observation  
2. Give, generally, at least 5 working days’ notice for an appraisal observation and 2 days for Department Review, of which lesson will be observed.  
3. Establish any prior information required from the teacher  
4. Whether any judgments will be made and what criteria will be used to make that judgement

5. Information about feedback and reporting  
6. Agree with the teacher the time and date of the feedback meeting (as soon as possible, within 5 days).

The new Ofsted Framework provides for short inspections. Similarly, the framework provides for inspectors to observe senior/middle management observing lessons for the purpose of triangulation of standards. Observations are a gathering of first hand evidence that inspectors view alongside other documentary evidence held in college. Inspectors will engage in:

* Short visits to a number of lessons spending a few minutes in each
* Short observation of small group teaching
* Shadow a student/s for the day

**9. CAPABILITY PROCEEDINGS**

Generally speaking, the headteacher (or designated manager) will draw up a plan with the member of staff concerned and their adviser, which will agree the number of observations, purposes, and who will carry them out. For further detail, please see the relevant policy ‘Managing Capability Issues in Schools’.

**10. NQTs**

Newly-qualified teachers receive the standard provision according to local and national statutory expectations. This involves being observed principally by subject tutors (usually Heads of Department) but also by the member of SLT responsible for NQT induction. By mutual agreement, the NQT may observe more experienced teachers, as part of their induction, and the focus of these observations should be tailored towards the NQT’s specific needs.

**11. PGCE TRAINEES**

Trainees are observed throughout their placements with us, in accordance with the ITT providers’ expectations and documentation, and against the QTS standards.

All mentors and tutors involved are expected to attend the appropriate training in line with the ITT providers’ expectations.

**12. COVER SUPERVISORS**

Following the introduction of Cover Supervisors in 2006, the college will conduct lesson observations on an annual basis as a means of monitoring and maintaining standards, identifying good practice and providing CPD if appropriate.

**13. LESSON OBSERVATION: GENERAL PRINCIPLES**Classroom observation:

* should not be unreasonably burdensome
* should include feedback
* should be accompanied by a clear statement on the purposes of the observation
* should involve objective evaluation
* should be reported honestly and fairly
* should be conducted in the best interests of the students.

**NB:** In the case of non-performance management observations such as peer observations or support, a brief feedback discussion may be sufficient. In the case of performance management, feedback should take place within the normal school day, and in an appropriate environment which ensures confidentiality.

**14. APPRAISAL**Classroom observation for the purposes of Appraisal:

* should not exceed a maximum of three hours per academic year except where evidence emerges that gives rise to concern about a teacher’s performance.
* should be the subject of agreement between the appraiser and the teacher concerned.
* should be arranged and conducted in accordance with the college policy.
* should be arranged with at least five working days notice before the observations take place.
* should be conducted by teachers and leaders who have received sufficient and appropriate training.
* should be accompanied by written feedback.
* should draw on the appropriate national standards

**15. CONDUCT OF THE OBSERVATIONS:**

It is important that all observers adopt a standardized approach to the process.

* Lesson observations should be pre-arranged with an agree focus (with the exception of Learning Walks).
* Observers should not disrupt the learning process within a session (with the exception of any issue relating to health and safety).
* Observers are expected to be punctual and as discreet as possible.
* The length of the observation should be confirmed before the lesson
* A post-observation meeting should be held as soon as possible, and within 5 working days
* The participants should discuss and agree the arrangements prior to the observation:

1. Samples of students’ work should be available in order for observers to assess the impact of   
 teaching and learning.

2. Observers should seek an appropriate time to talk to learners about the session.

3. Observations should be conducted using the current ‘Lesson Observation Form’ with all the   
 relevant data points completed.

**16. LIST FOR OBSERVERS**

The checklist below should be used for discussions between the observer/reviewer and the observed/reviewee.

1. Has the purpose, length and focus of the observation been made clear?

2. Has the teacher described the context of the lesson?

3. What level of involvement is required/appropriate?

4. When and how will feedback be given?

**17. FEED BACK**

Release time should be provided to enable the appraiser and appraisee to organize time for a discussion of outcomes and to provide feedback. Also, the appraiser should be given sufficient time to prepare the feedback.

Discussion of the professional development needs of each teacher should be built into any feedback.

Plans or statements arising from observation should be kept securely according to policy or noted on Evolve.

**18. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS**

Appraisal is a statutory and contractual obligation, and should be determined as per Part 3 / Section 19 of the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document 2016.

**APPENDIX 1: POSSIBLE PURPOSES OF LESSON OBSERVATION (not exhaustive)**

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| **Purpose** | **Who commissions** |
| 1 College’s own Self Review procedures | Headteacher or Head of Department / Subject Lead |
| 2 Department review | Headteacher and SLT |
| 3 Peer observation for CPD/self review/sharing of good practice | Teacher /Head of Department /SLT |
| 4 Subject adviser joint evaluation | In negotiation with College |
| 5 Appraisal | College |
| 6 Provision for SEN pupils | College or CYP Service |
| 7 NQT monitoring visit | Provider working with Head teacher/SLT |
| 8 Graduate Teacher Scheme /Teach First | Headteacher and Provider |
| 9 Pre-competency support | Headteacher |
| 10 Competency proceedings | Headteacher |
| 11 College-commissioned | Headteacher |

**APPENDIX 2: LEVELS OF OBSERVATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Purpose** | **Recommended levels** |
| **Main scale Class/Subject teacher & Middle & Senior Manager** |  |
| Department Review/support for DSEF (and therefore SEF) | Sufficient to ensure a secure overview of quality of teaching and learning. |
| College review | Sufficient to cover focus of review – subjects, key stage etc. As agreed with SLT/HoD |
| Subject adviser joint evaluation | Sufficient to ensure moderation of standards with SLT/HoD – to be kept to the minimum |
| Provision for SEN pupils | Sufficient to cover key requirements of DSP monitoring programme – as agreed with SLT |
| Consultancy related to National Strategy development | Sufficient to cover key requirements of strategy where school is targeted – levels agreed with SLT and HoD. |
| **NQTs** |  |
| SLT monitoring | 1 per term (minimum) + regular observations by department tutor (as policy) |
| NQT monitoring visit | As necessary |
| **GTTP / Teach First** |  |
| Graduate Teacher Scheme monitoring visit | 1 per term (+as guidelines) |
| **All teachers** |  |
| Appraisal | Max of 3 hours per year |
| Prospective leading subject teacher | As required |
| Schools causing concern or in OFSTED categories | As required/as referenced in the post Ofsted action plan |
| Pre-conpetency support | As agreed |
| Competency proceedings | As agreed |
| College-commissioned | As agreed internally |

**APPENDIX 3: PEER OBSERVATION AND CPD**

Peer observation involves a teacher observing the practice of two or more teachers learning from each other. It is a practical way of teachers supporting and learning from each other’s practice and knowledge. Peer observation should take place on a voluntary basis with teachers choosing to work together. SLT and Middle Leaders can recommend that an individual teacher observe a participating peer (subject to their agreement as part of support for their professional development or induction (for example, in the case of an NQT).

This professional development opportunity should be an open, supportive experience for departments and individuals, and may link with department review and planning.

The outcomes may include:

* Professional development for both parties
* Developing Teaching and learning in a culture in which classroom practice is discussed
* A wider evidence base for self evaluation
* Better departmental cohesion and consistency
* Stronger team work, transparency and professional relationships
* Better use of existing expertise
* Raising of standards

The College has provided opportunities to staff to participate in peer observation as part of their ongoing professional development.

Teaching staff will be encouraged to use the process to reinforce or expand knowledge and competence. For example, a teacher wishing to incorporate practical ideas for the use of ICT into their everyday teaching may learn as much if not more by observing a colleague who makes extensive use of ICT than they would by attending an external training session. In the same way, an NQT who would like to learn more about behaviour management techniques may observe a more experienced member of the scheme who can demonstrate techniques in a practical, rather than theoretical setting.

The focus, as with all observations, should be clear from the outset and must relate to teaching and learning.

Requests for lesson observation should be made at least two weeks before the lesson in question and made on the absence request form.

The observations undertaken as part of the peer observation scheme are separate from the Performance Management observations and are not intended as any part of teacher appraisal. However, teachers may wish to include the outcomes of such observations as part of their portfolio of evidence for the PM process.

Those wishing to gain experience or qualifications for career progression may wish to arrange to undertake observations and feedback sessions.