

Sibford Gower Primary School Classroom Observation Protocol

Introduction

1. The governing body is committed to ensuring that classroom observation is developmental and supportive and that those involved in the process will:

- carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
- seek to reach agreement in advance on how classroom observations are to be carried out;
- evaluate objectively;
- report accurately and fairly; and
- respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

2. Headteachers have a duty under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) to *lead, manage and develop the school workforce, including appraising and managing performance*. Classroom observation is essential for appraisal and for evaluating standards of teaching and learning.

3. Classroom observation may take different forms, including formal classroom observation, drop-ins and learning walks.

Planning for observation

4. In this school teachers' performance will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend upon the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the school. The amount of observation for each teacher should reflect and be proportionate to the needs of the individual, taking into account factors such as their appraisal objectives and whether the teacher works part or full time.

5. The Head Teacher will consult teachers on the number, pattern and types of observation that they can expect during the year and ensure that they receive reasonable notice of observations. As far as possible, formal classroom observations will take place at a time agreed between the teacher and the observer.

6. Information gathered during classroom observations will be used, as appropriate, for a variety of purposes including to inform school self-evaluation and school improvement strategies in accordance with the school's commitment to streamlining data collection and minimising bureaucracy and workload burdens on all staff.

7. The arrangements for classroom observation for appraisal will be included in the discussion of objectives and will include the amount of observation and its focus, the duration of the observation, when during the appraisal cycle the observation will take place and who will conduct the observation.

8. Where there are concerns about a teacher's performance additional classroom observations may be arranged. These will be discussed and agreed in a 'concerns' meeting between the appraiser and the teacher, as described in the Appraisal Policy (paragraphs 48-51).

Conducting observations

9. Classroom observations for appraisal will only be undertaken by persons with qualified teacher status (QTS). In addition, classroom observation will only be undertaken by those who have had adequate preparation and possess the appropriate professional skills to undertake observation and to provide constructive oral and written feedback and support, in the context of professional dialogue between colleagues.

Feedback and records

10. Oral feedback will be given as soon as possible after an observation and no later than the end of the following working day. It will be given during directed time in a suitable, private environment.

11. Written feedback will be provided within five working days of the observation taking place. If issues emerge from an observation that were not part of the planned focus of the observation these should also be covered in the written feedback and appropriate action discussed with the teacher.

12. The written record of feedback will include the date on which the observation took place, the lesson observed and the length of the observation. The teacher has the right to append written comments on the feedback document. No written notes in addition to the written feedback will be kept.

13. Ofsted style grades are not a part of the appraisal process and should not feed into the assessment of a teacher's performance. However, a school may choose to use Ofsted grades to inform their evaluation of the standards of teaching and learning in the school.

Drop-in observations and Learning Walks

14. In addition to formal classroom observations, the Head Teacher or other leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may "drop in" on lessons to evaluate the standards of teaching and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained.

15. Evidence from drop-ins and learning walks should not be used in the assessment of an individual teacher's performance unless this has been agreed as evidence in the appraisal process.

16. The duration, frequency and scope of drop-ins and learning walks should be considered carefully. They should have a clear rationale and focus which should be communicated to teachers.

Peer observation

17. Teachers should have the opportunity to engage in classroom observation with other professional colleagues through peer observation in order to review and develop their practice. Professional development through peer observation is voluntary.

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)

18. Observations are an important part of the statutory induction process and support for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The general principles set out above apply equally to NQTs, in particular reasonable notice of observations and the provision of feedback.

Professional capability procedures

19. Classroom observation may be used as part of a programme of structured support for teachers who are subject to formal capability procedures and to provide evidence of a teacher's progress. The amount and focus of observation will be discussed with the teacher.