



# Lesson Observation Policy

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Reviewed by:	Board .
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Approval By:	D. Jadoo .
Next Review	October 2018

# CUL Academy Trust Limited

## Lesson Observation Policy

At CUL Academy Trust Limited we know that high quality teaching and learning is key to pupil progress. Lesson observations provide a chance to:

- develop teachers' pedagogy
- recognise and share good practice
- identify areas for improvement that can inform professional development
- foster a climate of professional reflection
- provide ongoing feedback to teachers and leaders
- gather evidence for performance management and school improvement cycles.

Classroom observations are therefore an important way of ensuring consistently high quality teaching and learning throughout the school, monitoring the implementation of school policies and checking that the needs of all pupils are met.

A formal classroom observation is one element which is used to assess the quality of teaching and learning over time. We will also draw on evidence including, though not confined to:

- pupil achievement and progress
- learning displayed in books and classwork
- pupil feedback
- teacher self-evaluations.

### **Conducting a lesson observation**

CUL Academy Trust Limited makes a commitment to conduct lesson observations in a way that is professional, supportive and developmental.

We recognise that observations only provide evidence of a particular moment in time, and will not necessarily include many other aspects of successful teaching. The observer must also look at progress data, assessment and feedback, work in books and the views of pupils in order to evaluate the quality of teaching over time.

We expect observers to respect the confidentiality of the information gained, and evaluate the teaching as objectively as possible.

Observees should feel involved and supported throughout the observation process. It should be part of a professional conversation and the appropriate atmosphere for any observation is constructive and non-threatening.

Verbal feedback from the lesson observation will always be given as soon as possible after the observation and no later than the end of the following working day.

Written feedback should follow thereafter, within 10 working days of the lesson observation taking place.

The written record of feedback should include the length of the observation date, the date on which it occurred and the lesson observed. The teacher being observed should be able to add their comments to the written document, and access the record freely.

### **Categories of observation**

We use four types of classroom observation.

1. Performance related observations. These are used for NQT and trainee assessment, performance management and capability procedures. They will form part of the evidence for judgements influencing career and pay progression, and will be taken with the wider picture of the teacher's performance over time.
2. Pedagogy focused observations. These are held primarily for the teacher's professional development and the sharing of good practice across the school. They are non-judgmental and undertaken for the development of both reviewer and reviewee. Typically they would be used to share examples of good practice.
3. Learning walks. These are held to give a snapshot of teaching practice across the school. They focus on whole-school points for development rather than individual practice, and are not used for performance management.
4. Drop-in and coach observations. These are frequent, brief and have a single focus. They often form part of an ongoing development programme.

### **Performance related lesson observations**

We conduct lesson observations for the purpose of performance management 4 x times x 4 hours per year. Teachers may request additional formal lesson observations if they desire. Additional observations are also likely to occur if there is cause for concern over a teacher's performance.

The observer will make a judgement on the quality of teaching over time which must include the progress of the students and the quality of assessment and feedback. Teachers should be given at least x working days' notice of an observation and told the focus in advance.

All comments and evaluations should be recorded in the school's lesson observation record sheet.

If teaching over time for one class is judged to be inadequate or requires improvement if a lesson gives cause for concern our standard procedure is to first establish with the member of staff whether this is a fair representation of their practice. If this is reflective of their general teaching, we will put in place a targeted action plan. This would focus on providing access to good practice across the school, mentoring and coaching as well as any relevant professional development.

Initial targets for improvement are then reviewed in a follow-up observation. If practice has not been improved, then a more detailed intervention will be put in place. Further observations may take place in support of that member of staff. Any monitoring should be proportionate to the needs of the individual.

Any formal proceedings should follow the school's performance management and capability policy. Newly Qualified Teachers follow their own pattern of observations.

### **Pedagogy focused lesson observations**

Lesson observations are an essential tool for sharing good practice across the school, and providing every teacher with a chance to learn and develop their teaching. To this end, as well as formal lesson observation procedures used for performance management, we encourage and use a variety of types of informal observations, including e.g. drop-in observations, open classroom policies, video observation technologies, lesson study, peer observations, teaching triads.

These observations can be part of the school's planned cycle of observation or might be arranged between observer and observee at their mutual convenience.

### **Learning walks**

Learning walks allow us to get a snapshot of teaching across the school and gather evidence of staff development needs. These should not be used for performance management or focus explicitly on the performance of an individual; their purpose is for whole-school improvement and to assess the quality of teaching over time in the school.

- Learning walks will assess the quality of whole-school teaching, normally focusing on a particular aspect of practice.
- Individual teachers will not be named in any report produced as the result of a learning walk.
- Learning walks should aim not to disrupt either pupils or teachers unduly.

### **Drop-in and coach observations**

Drop-in and coaching sessions are short, focused and developmental. Feedback takes place on the same day and is focused on a single improvement point, which is followed up at the next observation. Written feedback is generally limited to a brief paragraph.

This policy was adopted for full implementation on

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body on a 2 yearly cycle and must be signed by the Chair of Governors and the Principal.

Policy Reviewed:	3/11/2016 .
Next Review:	October 2018 .

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Signature of Chair of Governors	Signature of Principal
	