

Classroom Observations & Learning Walk Protocols

Date Written: October 2020
Reviewed: September 2022
Date of Next Review: September 2024



Classroom observation

Purpose

- The headteacher has a statutory responsibility for *“evaluating standards of teaching and learning in the school, and ensuring that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained.”*
- As part of the headteacher’s responsibility for carrying out the school’s appraisal policy, determined by the governing body, the headteacher is required to ensure that classroom observation arrangements, to support teachers’ appraisal, are in place. There is a statutory limit of three hours per appraisal cycle on the amount of observation in the case of appraisal.

Classroom observation and drop-in policy

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;
- evaluate objectively
- report accurately and fairly; and
- respect the confidentiality of the information gained

The governing body recognises that classroom observation will take place for the purposes of appraisal and the evaluation of teaching and learning

Classroom observation for the statutory purposes of appraisal and evaluating the standards of teaching and learning will not exceed a total of three hours for each appraisee within each appraisal cycle.

The number of times each teacher experiences classroom observation for the purposes of appraisal will usually be a maximum of three per appraisal cycle. The amount of observation for each teacher will reflect, and be proportionate to, the needs of the individual. If any concerns are raised about a teacher’s performance, this maximum may be extended but only by mutual agreement.

The arrangement for classroom observation for the purposes of appraisal will be included in the appraisal planning statement and will:

- included the amount of observations;
- specify its primary purposes;
- specify any particular aspects of the teacher’s performance which will be assessed;
- specify the duration of the observations;
- specify when the observations will take place;

Drop-In Observations

'Drop-in' observations are completed as part of statutory responsibilities, under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document in order to keep the work of the school under review and ensuring that proper standards of performance are maintained.

'Drop-in' observations are genuinely concerned with information gathering and not connected in any way with either performance management or capability procedures.

Watergate classroom observation protocol covers 'drop-in' observations including reasonable notification to staff in advance that a drop-in observation may take place or that a regular pattern of drop-ins has been established. Feedback will be provided where appropriate and will take place within a supportive working and learning environment.

Learning Walks

'Learning Walks' are a series of organised and highly structured enquiry 'walks' through the classrooms of a school in order to collect evidence about teaching and learning, evidence of progress and areas for development. They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgmental.

Learning walks protocol

- Learning walks are a whole-school improvement activity
- Staff will be informed of the focus of the learning walk prior to its commencement
- Staff will be informed in advance of the date of a learning walk and who is conducting
- Learning walks will be conducted with minimum disruption to teachers, staff and pupils
- Learning walks will be undertaken in a supportive and professional manner
- The performance of an individual will never be the focus of a learning walk
- Learning walks will not be used for the purposes of capability procedures
- A maximum of two colleagues will be involved in learning walks at any time
- Staff will be given the opportunity to see any written records which have been made during the learning walks
- A learning walk is part of the information and evidence collected by the school leadership team to verify school self-evaluation and to inform school development
- The outcomes will be shared at a whole school level highlighting effective practices