

SUTTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL



CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Version 2018v1

Approved by Governors: February 2018

To be reviewed annually

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Introduction

1. This Governing Body recognises that there are a variety of means by which teacher performance may be assessed. We believe that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important, both as a way of assessing individual performance and of gaining useful information that can inform school improvement more generally.
2. The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that all 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 classroom observation to be carried out;
 - evaluate objectively;
 - report accurately and fairly; and
 - respect the confidentiality of the information gained.
3. In accordance with these principles, the Headteacher will:
 - consult staff on the pattern of classroom observation which teachers can expect annually and seek agreement with the teachers and their recognised organisations on these arrangements;
 - ensure that there will be a reasonable amount of time between classroom observations in order to provide time for development to be achieved, irrespective of the purpose of those observations;
 - ensure that classroom observation is undertaken solely by persons with qualified teacher status and the appropriate training and professional skills. Neither pupils nor governors will undertake classroom observations for the purpose of assessing teacher performance (although governors may, by agreement with the teacher concerned, visit a lesson to familiarise themselves with their link area); and
 - ensure that as far as possible, the results of observations are used for multiple purposes, in order to avoid any unnecessary observations.
4. The Governing Body recognises that visits to classrooms by the Headteacher or senior staff in order to carry out a support plan (as defined in the appraisal policy) with a teacher or talk to pupils are separate from this classroom observation protocol.
5. The purpose of visits to classrooms by the Headteacher and senior managers will be made clear before they occur.
6. Headteachers or other leaders with responsibility for learning and teaching standards may “drop in” or undertake other observations to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained.
7. The length and frequency of “drop ins” or other observations and the notice to be given, will vary depending on specific circumstances but will be in accordance with the school’s classroom observation and drop-in policy.

Maximum periods and occasions of observation

8. Classroom observation for the purposes of performance management/appraisal will normally be limited to one observation per teacher per term in each performance management cycle.

9. Where there have been concerns regarding the performance of an individual teacher, additional classroom observation may form part of the teacher's support plan. In such cases, the purpose and timing of classroom observations will be agreed as part of the support plan.

A teacher may choose to request additional classroom observations at any time.

10. Where more than one observation per term is to be conducted, the Governing Body agrees that the amount of observation will be kept to the shortest period on the fewest number of occasions necessary.

Preparations for observations

11. In keeping with the Governing Body's commitment to supportive and developmental classroom observation, the date and time of observations conducted for the purposes of performance management/appraisal or for the evaluation of standards of teaching and learning (or for both purposes) will be fixed at least five working days in advance. Every effort will be made for observation to be conducted at an agreed time.
12. Before any performance management/appraisal observation is conducted, there will be an opportunity for the reviewer and reviewee to meet in order to discuss the context of the lesson to be observed. Where another teacher or a member of support staff will be present during a class which is to be observed, consideration will be given to any other arrangements that may need to be made.
13. The arrangements for classroom observation for appraisal purposes will be included in the planning and review statement and will:
 - include the number of observations to take place (normally not more than three per year);
 - specify the primary purpose(s) of the observation;
 - specify any particular aspects of the teacher's performance which will be assessed;
 - specify the duration of the observation;
 - specify when the observation will take place; and
 - specify who will conduct the observation.

Feedback and records

14. The Governing Body recognises that in order to be useful to the teacher whose performance is under review, oral feedback from classroom observation must be given as early as possible. Oral feedback will therefore be given at a pre-arranged time for the purposes of performance management as soon as possible after the observation and normally no later than the end of the following working day.
15. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that sufficient time is allocated within the school day to enable participants in classroom observations to discuss and agree the arrangements for the observations. In addition, release time within the school day will be provided, as soon as possible, to enable the reviewer and reviewee to organise time for discussion on the outcomes of classroom observation. Time will be made available for preparation and feedback for classroom observation for performance management/appraisal purposes in addition to PPA time.
16. Written feedback will be provided within five working days of the observation taking place. The reviewer will be given sufficient time within the school day to prepare the conclusions agreed with the reviewee on the outcomes of the classroom observation.

17. The record of feedback will include the date on which the observation took place, the lesson observed and the length of the observation. The reviewee will be entitled to append written comments to the feedback document. No written notes will be kept in addition to the feedback document.
18. Teachers will have access to all written accounts of the observation after their lessons. The feedback will be treated as confidential for access by the teacher, the reviewer (appraiser) and the Headteacher.

‘Learning Walks’ and Drop-Ins

19. This Governing Body agrees that ‘learning walks’ or other short visits to classes such as drop-ins will only be carried out in accordance with this protocol. Drop ins are not intended to take the place of lesson observation.
20. ‘Learning walks’ may take place in order to collect evidence about teaching and learning, evidence of progress and areas for school development. They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgmental and are a whole-school improvement activity. The results of information gained during learning walks and drop ins are not intended to form part of either the appraisal or the capability procedures but may feed into further CPD carried out by the whole school.
21. A programme of ‘learning walks’ should be agreed with teachers so that they know the date, time and focus of the learning walk and who will be conducting it, so that they can organise their classes accordingly. The Headteacher will avoid undertaking a learning walk or drop in at times when the whole staff is under additional pressure, for example during parent consultation week.
22. The purpose or focus of a ‘learning walk’ should be explained to all relevant staff prior to its commencement. That purpose or focus will not relate to the performance of an individual teacher.
23. ‘Learning walks’ will be conducted with minimum disruption to teachers and pupils and will be undertaken in a supportive, courteous and professional manner. A maximum of two colleagues will be involved in such visits in any classroom at any time.
24. Pupils will not be asked for their views of an individual teacher during ‘learning walks’.
25. Those teachers whose classes are visited will be given the opportunity to see any written records which have been made during the ‘learning walk’.
27. Reviews of the practice of undertaking ‘learning walks’ will be held with all staff during staff meetings. Any concerns about the implementation of this protocol should be raised with the Headteacher either by the individual teacher concerned or with the support of the school trade union representative.