

The Heath Family Multi Academy Trust Lesson observation protocol

As part of the statutory responsibilities of Principals to evaluate the teaching and learning within schools and carry out performance management reviews it is necessary to initiate classroom observations.

Performance management is a statutory and contractual obligation as set out in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document and the Appraisal Regulations.

Principals have a responsibility to “lead, manage and develop the school workforce, including appraising and managing performance” (Paragraph 47.8 STPCD 2016)

Below is the school Classroom observation protocol that sets out guidelines for both observer/reviewer and observed/reviewee.

Prior to the lesson

Teachers should be informed of/there should be:

- Lesson observations will be linked to issues of pedagogy and practice that will develop teachers in their ability to improve the outcomes for their students.
- Information and arrangements for observations should include the reasons why the observation is taking place.
- Teachers observed will be given at least five days’ notice of any observation.
- Lesson observations may be for the full lesson and the teacher observed will be notified as to which member of staff is to carry out the observation.
- Lesson observations will last no longer than one hour per observation.
- If the teacher observed wishes to give/discuss a focus of the lesson observation then it is their responsibility to seek out the observer to clarify the focus prior to the lesson. If this is not done then the focus of the lesson will be the learning and the teaching that facilitates it.
- If the agreed focus is a starter or plenary then the observer may stay for the duration of the lesson in order to assess the impact of the starter or plenary on the learning outcomes.
- An opportunity for the teacher observed to describe the context of the lesson observed.
- A lesson plan may be submitted prior to the lesson, but this is not compulsory.

The Conduct of classroom observations

- Classroom observations will be conducted by QTS staff.
- Classroom observations will be supportive and developmental.
- Observations will not take place in a negative atmosphere and will be conducted in a supportive and professional manner. They will be neither intrusive nor threatening.
- The observer should act in an unobtrusive, sensitive and professional manner.

- Observations:
 - Should be undertaken with professionalism, integrity and courtesy.
 - Should involve objective evaluation.
 - Should be reported honestly and fairly.
 - Should involve accurate communication about its purpose and outcome.
 - Should be conducted in the best interests of the students and the school.

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- Should ensure that the information gained through the observation is confidential to the reviewer and reviewee.

There should not be “bunching” of lesson observations with teachers given reasonable amount of time between observations.

Feedback

- The written feedback will be an accurate reflection on the verbal feedback.
- Verbal feedback will, where possible be given no later than the end of the next school day and if possible immediately after the observation.
- Planning, preparation and assessment time will not be used for feedback unless requested by the teacher observed.
- The reviewer will complete the agreed proforma during the observation. This will form the basis of the verbal feedback.
- The proforma will summarise the focus, what was learned from the observation, the feedback given and any subsequent actions or other follow up.
- The record of the observation will be made available to the observed teacher within five working days.
- Feedback will include all the positive aspects of the lesson and practical advice for realistic improvements.
- Feedback may take the form of a brief discussion after the class for observations that fall outside the requirements of performance management E.G voluntary requested observations
- Feedback will take place in an appropriate environment that ensures confidentiality.
- Teachers have the right to record their own comments if they wish.
- Discussion of the professional needs of each teacher should be built in to any feedback and used to identify opportunities for support and continued professional development.

NQTS

- NQTs will be observed as part of their induction support package and will be appraised according to teachers standards.
- NQTs will be observed in accordance with the induction procedures and will be observed in addition to the agreed number for post induction teachers.
- The protocol does apply to NQTs with regard to “bunching” of observations and the need to be informed on the focus, timing and purpose of observations prior to them taking place.

Criteria and arrangements for observation

- Classroom observations for the purpose of performance management and school self review will be agreed between the observer and the observee and will be set out in the performance review statement of each teacher.
- They will be used to gather information for school self-evaluation and for the purpose of enabling the head to discharge his/her responsibility to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in order to provide a mechanism for monitoring and improving this.
- Formal observations will be conducted by qualified teachers.
- All those who act as observers for classroom observation purposes will have the appropriate skills and training to undertake observations and provide constructive feedback and support.

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- The Principal may invite others such as local authority advisors, inspectors and consultants to conduct observations. The purpose of these observations should be made clear to the teachers who are being observed and agreement sought with the teachers on when and whether they should take place.
- If these observations provide information to the Principal on the quality of teaching and learning then such observations are covered by the protocols time limit set out below.
- The total period of classroom observations arranged for performance management purposes shall not exceed three hours per cycle or exceed 3 separate observations.
- Classroom observations can be carried out by The Principal and delegated staff.
- Any additional observations should be agreed between the Observer and the observee and the same verbal and written feedback given.
- Unannounced formal observations for the purposes of performance management will not take place.
- Classroom observations generated by the requirements of the school will not take place immediately after an inspection by, for example, OFSTED.
- The Principal should consult with teaching staff and recognised organisations on the pattern of classroom observations, which teachers can expect annually.
- The number of classroom observations per year within the normal performance management cycle will usually be the same for every teacher though this may be subject to change as long as no more than 3 hours of teaching is observed.
- Proportionality will be used for part time teachers.
- If due to no fault of the observee the observations are not undertaken then no detriment will be shown towards the observee with regards to the observation evidence compiled for appraisal completion.
- Paired observations for quality assurance purposes will be counted as one observation. The observee has the right to ask for only one observer to be in the room if they object.
- Where evidence emerges which gives rise to concern about the observees teaching performance, classroom observations may be arranged in addition to this protocol as part of the appraisal process.
- If additional lesson observations are required then the teacher will be informed in advance as part of The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust Support Programme as part of the appraisal process.