

Ysgol Aberconwy



Lesson Observation **Policy**

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THIS POLICY HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

Signed:

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LESSON OBSERVATION POLICY

As a teacher is a professional in a learning community, lesson observations provide an opportunity for teachers to be reflective in their own practice and effectiveness and to further their own skills through this method of continual professional development.

This policy will enable staff within the school to:

- Adopt consistent approach to lesson observation, both formal and informal.
- Understand their role and responsibilities in lesson observation as a method of CPD.

It should also be read in conjunction with the 'Learning Walks' policy, which are also considered to be 'lesson observations'.

General Principles

Lesson Observation makes an important contribution to the school's CPD and PL provision for teachers and all teachers are expected to participate in it. Criteria and guidelines, against which judgements are made in a formal observation, are available to all staff.

A teacher being observed should expect to receive fair and just feedback that is objective and evidenced against these criteria and guidelines.

Teachers holding posts of responsibility are also expected to participate in formal lesson observations as observers and are expected to ensure that they are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to make an informed and objective, evidence based, judgement about the work of a colleague.

The purpose of lesson observation within the framework of school improvement is:

- To raise standards of teaching and learning through a process of quality assurance in the delivery of a high quality educational provision.
- To identify and disseminate good practice and to identify staff development needs.
- To provide evidence for performance management, threshold and internal reviewing procedures and systems, and to meet the requirements of external awarding bodies.

Categories of Observation

Observations fall into two main categories – formal and informal. There must be an agreed understanding of the category of an observation before it takes place.

- Formal observations are those being used for NQT, ITE, Teaching and Learning Audits, Departmental Inquiries, competency procedure and similar.
- Informal observations are those used for professional developments and those forming part of the curriculum area's internal monitoring systems. Peer observations and "Open Door" observations are also considered to

be informal. Performance Management observations are to be used for personal development. These will follow the school's Performance Management / Peer Review Policy.

It is expected that teachers who have a responsibility for making formal observations, will take part in a lesson observation moderation exercise with a colleague on a regular basis. Such an observation will be deemed to be informal.

Informal Observations

- Informal observations may only be conducted with the full agreement of both parties and shared understanding of the purpose of the observation.
- No grading of the teacher's competency should be made during, or as result of, an informal observation.
- Any recording carried out in an informal observation should be previously agreed by the teacher and a clear agreement of the destination of the written record/hard copy agreed.
- No evidence obtained through an informal observation may provide evidence for judgements that inform Threshold Assessment, Teaching and Learning Audit, NQT Assessment, ITE Assessment, Departmental Reviews, competency procedures or similar.
- Video footage and/or audio recording of a lesson or part of a lesson is an informal observation and must be agreed in advance.
- Any CPD needs identified as a result of an informal observation or through the feedback, should be discussed with the Head of department or relevant CPD Co-ordinator. This may include the CPD needs of the observer or of the teacher.

Formal Observations

- In the case of the Department Inquiry the week in which the observations will take place will be known at least 2 weeks in advance. The individual lesson will be identified. The time for all other formal observations must be agreed at least two working days in advance.
- It is good practice for the teacher being observed to provide a lesson plan, but this is not a requirement. Lesson plans for a formal observation may be provided at the start of the observation and should be developed using an agreed lesson planning sheet. The only exception to this policy is that of a situation for which an external agency has provided a custom form (e.g. ITE).
- The lesson observation record sheet produced by the school should be used to record all formal observations.
- The observer must strive to arrive at the lesson on time, and before the teacher has started teaching. The observer should remain throughout the lesson, except in the circumstance of a "double" lesson, where the period of observation should be agreed between the teacher and the observer, but in total, should be no less than the length of a single period.
- Although the place where the observer will sit in the classroom to conduct the observations may be agreed between the teacher and the observer, it must be accepted, that to carry out the necessary requirement of a formal observation, the observer may need to move around the classroom and to talk to students and inspect their work.
- During a formal observation, the teacher may choose to make the following documents available to the observer:

- Schemes of work and learning plans showing the basic structure of the whole course and the module of work as appropriate.
- A lesson plan (see above).
- A Data summary for the group, providing their prior attainment, targets for the end of the Key Stage and assessment grades awarded throughout their time with this teacher.
- All judgements and gradings made during, or as a result of, a formal observation, must be directly related to the definitions of “Effective Teaching, Learning and Assessment” as provided by Estyn. Evidence must be produced by the observer that supports any judgements made.
- The observer must provide feedback at a time convenient to the teacher and as soon as possible following the observation.
- The lesson observation record sheet, should be used as evidence in the feedback and, following the feedback, should be copied with one copy given to the teacher and the original should be given to the Headteacher.
- No copies, paper or electronic, may be kept by the Observer, except in the case of NQT and ITE observation or where the Observer is the Headteacher.
- Any CPD needs identified as a result of a formal observation or through the feedback, should be passed to the CPD Coordinator.
- Observations for use in performance management must be recorded on the Bluesky system.

Disputes regarding observations

In the event of a difference of opinion relating to the organisation of an observation, the conduct of an observation, or judgements made during an observation or as a result of an observation, the Headteacher should be called upon, by either party, to mediate.

If the situation cannot be resolved, the Headteacher will conduct a second observation and all records pertaining to the original observation, will be destroyed.

Frequency of lesson Observation

A teacher will not be observed formally for more than a total of 3 hours per year, without prior agreement, or unless observations form part of a formal process (see policies on ‘Capability’ and ‘Teacher Training’). Nor should a teacher expect to be observed on more than three separate occasions in a school year and a teacher will not be visited in any more than 3 learning walks during an academic year (see ‘Learning Walks’ policy).