



LYDIATE  
LEARNING  
TRUST

# Classroom Observation Protocol (LLT)



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ENGAGE, ENABLE,  
EMPOWER

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## INTRODUCTION

Classroom observation across Lydiate Learning Trust is one of a repertoire of strategies which help staff and the school as a whole, to:

- 1) Gather information about the core work of learning and teaching. 2. Develop as an individual
- 2) Provides appropriate CPD and professional development strategies
- 3) Develops teams working within faculties, departments or other groupings.

Classroom observation should always be carried out sensitively and professionally and should involve staff in consultation about the purposes and format of the exercise so that everyone involved is clear and fully informed about their role in the activity.

## PURPOSES OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

- 1) To improve learning and teaching as part of individual staff member, subject department, faculty, whole school self-evaluation procedures.
- 2) To give teachers the opportunity to reflect on and discuss their practice with each other and with school management
- 3) To share and celebrate success and good practice.
- 4) To promote a collegiate approach to developing learning and teaching
- 5) To allow everyone to have a better understanding of the work and professional practice of teachers.
- 6) To contribute to standards and quality reporting, including evidence for OFSTED.
- 7) To contribute to the process of professional review and development, as appropriate.
- 8) To contribute to the process of professional development at the request of the member of staff.

## PRINCIPLES OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

- 1) The purpose, method and timing of the visit will be subject to prior consultation, and may be linked to the school or department improvement plan, to issues raised in an OFSTED report, to exploring alternative ways to deliver a topic, to supporting a colleague, to diagnosing or working out a solution to a problem.
- 2) It will take place only after consultation/discussion between the observer and the class teacher, and other senior managers as appropriate, with the expectations being clearly agreed.
- 3) It will be followed soon after, ideally within 24 hours by a meeting between the observer and the class teacher in order to discuss the observation process. Both parties should endeavour to meet this deadline.
- 4) All observations will take place in normal teaching time.
- 5) It may be undertaken by staff members in the school, peers or external visitors e.g. OFSTED, HMI, evaluation supporters depending on the purpose of the observation.
- 6) It will be on a strictly professional basis, reinforcing the mutually respectful relationship with professional colleagues and with students.

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- 7) It will involve a general process of classroom interaction involving the observer, the class teacher and any other staff present.
- 8) The agreed department/faculty observation pro forma should be used and should not be carried out as a 'crit lesson' or based on a checklist. Brief notes may be kept, but should be done unobtrusively, and should not impede the observer's engagement with the learning and teaching process.
- 9) An individual teacher is free to request that all general lesson observations be unannounced if they so wish.

\*When the observation is used as part of the monitoring process of Learning and Teaching a written record, as appropriate, should be produced by the observer, giving the class teacher the opportunity to record his/her comments on the process. Where there is disagreement, this should be recorded and referred to the direct line manager. The observer, in this case must have the relevant and appropriate skills to observe.

Within these principles all observers should demonstrate professionalism, integrity, courtesy and objectivity in the conduct of observation activities.

## Important points to note

- Classroom observation as described in this protocol should be part of the normal professional support and quality assurance processes which are part and parcel of the relationship between any class teacher and his/her manager(s). As such, it should be non-threatening and flexible.
- There will be times when a 'broad brush' view of a specific aspect will be taken, through a series of short classroom observations. A written record may be made of the overall evaluation, and not necessarily of the brief classroom observations, unless specific individual requests are made. Feedback should be provided which may be to individuals or to the whole school community.
- A teacher's observation record will be confidential to his/her immediate manager, and the senior management of the school.
- Personalising the observation process will lead to targeted and tailored staff development and training. Teaching and learning approaches will then reflect the core values and qualities of the school.
- Whilst observations can be conducted by one individual there is often great value in two professionals discussing the evidence that they can provide.
- Additionally, it could be considered good practice to ensure that aspiring school leaders and other senior leaders have the opportunity to develop their skills alongside a more experienced colleague.
- Observations should include no more than two observers in a classroom at any one time.
- The planned curriculum (the learning pedagogy) should not be adjusted to accommodate the needs of the observation.
- The number and length of observations must be proportionate to the teacher's need
- It is in the teacher's best interest to prepare a plan and a seating plan for the observer and submit relevant student profiles and data.

## Observations & Evidence Protocol To Support The School Appraisal Policy

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Lydiat Learning Trust recognises that lesson observations play a part in the gathering of evidence for the appraisal process for individual teachers and also in the gathering of evidence to evaluate the quality of Teaching & Learning across the school.

Teacher Appraisal requires the appraiser to make a judgement of teacher's progress towards agreed objectives and also the totality of their performance against relevant standards.

Evidence may come predominantly, but not exclusively, from the following sources:

- Scrutiny of student work
- Lesson Observation
- Student Voice Panels
- Themed Learning Walk Observations.

For appraisal purposes the observations conducted as part of departmental inspections will be used to evaluate progress towards agreed objectives unless the appraiser requests an additional 60-minute observation. This will be agreed as part of the target setting process.

The school also has a published cycle of observations to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school. These observations are usually graded under the existing OFSTED Inspection Framework. These observations will usually be announced and be for approximately 30 minutes.

It may be the case that a teacher teaches across more than one Faculty, and therefore a second observation to gather evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the second subject may be deemed necessary.

The school also conducts "Themed Learning Walks". These arise from areas for development highlighted in the self-evaluation process and may involve visits to a number of classrooms of no more than 20 minutes to focus on one aspect of the school's practice rather than on the performance of any one teacher (e.g. Literacy, behaviour for learning).

## **NQT's & I.T.T**

As a Trust we would aim to support all NQT's and trainees as far as is possible and one of the strategies deployed may be to welcome NQT's and trainees into our classrooms to observe and participate.

In addition, observations are a very important part of the statutory induction process for NQT's themselves.

## **Ofsted**

In order for a judgment to be made on: the quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and the leadership and management, visits to lessons will be undertaken by Inspectors during an inspection. Inspectors may also be accompanied by an appropriate school leader.

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## Teaching and Learning CPD Programmes

The vision for all Teaching and Learning Programmes is to create a model that fosters continuing professional development for all: the concept of stakeholders studying their craft by continually seeking to improve, learn and develop in order that we engage, enable and empower teachers, leaders and students



Therefore, and as part of ongoing professional development, the LLT Teaching and Learning Programmes will include lessons visits as learning opportunities to enable staff to consciously seek to improve practice by learning from each other. Each strand of CPD involves a form of lesson visit or lesson study: Strand 1 (Olevi training); Strand 2 (Teach Like a Champion lesson study); and Strand 3 (Research-based enquiry) incorporate visits to lessons which may take the form of learning walks, peer observation or enquiry-based lesson studies, thus providing ongoing professional development for all in a practical, supportive and powerful way. If pre-arranged and agreed with participants, feedback may be provided using the format appropriate to each Strand, for example QFF (question,

## Governor Visits

Governors may wish to visit classrooms to become familiar with the school or to observe specific aspects of the curriculum - Governor visits are not observations. Such visits should always be by prior arrangement and follow procedures agreed and specified by the Headteacher.

## Learning Walks/Drop-Ins

Learning Walks or Drop-Ins will be undertaken by the members of the LLT, the Headteacher, members of the leadership team and appropriate responsibility holders. They will focus on a strand associated with school improvement and generic prior notice will be issued to staff in advance. A Learning Walk or Drop-In will not be in excess of 15 minutes. Some feedback may be offered in terms of What Went Well (WWW) and Even Better If (EBI) if this arrangement has been agreed before the commencement of the Learning Walk/Drop-In.

If any aspect of classroom practice seen during Learning Walks gives cause for concern, the teacher will be informed so that, if necessary, further investigation may be undertaken or additional observations arranged.

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## **PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT WHERE OBSERVATIONS DEEM LEARNING TO BE INADEQUATE OR SATISFACTORY**

At Lydiate Learning Trust we aim to consistently deliver lessons in which the learning and progress is always outstanding. However, we accept that on occasions this may be good. In situations where this is not evident the following support could apply:

- The appointment of a support partner from the Senior Leadership Team
- The development of an appropriate support package that targets main areas for development support could include:
- Focussed observations of outstanding practice within, or beyond, the faculty in which the teacher works
- Support with designing appropriate learning activities
- Attendance at training appropriate to need
- Coaching and shared experience

(NB This is not an exhaustive list and at Lydiate Learning Trust we aim to provide support that is specifically tailored to need.)

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