

STOKE PARK INFANT SCHOOL



OBSERVATION POLICY

Date Written March 2020

Approved by Governors Spring 2020

Stoke Park Infant School

Observation Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's performance management policy.

At Stoke Park Infant School we are constantly evaluating the quality of teaching and learning so that we ensure that children make the best progress they possibly can. Teaching is evaluated through classroom observations, data and progress, learning in files and the environment. Evidence is triangulated and used to judge teaching over time. As part of this process we regularly monitor the quality of classroom practice to ensure that it is consistent with whole school policies. At Stoke Park Infants we expect all teaching to be Good or Outstanding and use the outcomes of classroom observations to evaluate the quality of practice and plan for personalised and whole school Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The following policy outlines the procedures in place to ensure that classroom monitoring is a manageable and supportive process, conducive to the learning needs of staff and quality outcomes for all pupils.

School leaders are always monitoring every aspect of school life, talking with teachers, support staff, families and children; evaluating the quality of provision across the school for all children.

At Stoke Park Infant School we aim to keep observations undertaken to the minimum required to implement Performance Management and School Improvement. Observations will be undertaken as part of the Performance Management procedure, NQT induction, whole school self-evaluation, the monitoring of the curriculum in the whole school context. The burden of additional paperwork will be carefully considered and kept to a minimum.

Observations will be a combination of both planned and unplanned visits. When the agreement is for a planned visit, there will be an agreed focus and timetable before the observation takes place and feedback after. For unplanned visits that support the performance management cycle, feedback will always be given. Alongside observations, the Headteacher will complete learning walks, drop ins and daily check ins to ensure that the school learning environment maintains at a high standard.

The total period for classroom observation arranged for any teacher as part of performance management will not exceed three hours per cycle having regard to the individual circumstances of the teacher. There is no requirement to use all of the three hours. The amount of observation for each teacher should reflect and be proportionate to the needs of the individual.

Why observe? –

To

- Know strengths and weakness in subject areas, standards and coverage, teaching, learning and progress
- Gain views on pupils attitudes
- Know strengths and weaknesses of teaching; ensure consistency through the school
- Support and advise colleagues based on first hand experience
- Have the chance to reflect on own practice and opportunity to develop our teaching skills
- Share good practice and ensure consistency

- Meet CPD requirements.
- Inform INSET needs.

What could be observed?

- Aspects of teaching or learning to ensure lessons are good or outstanding
 - Use of questions, modelling, use of time and or resources
 - Objectives understood
- Focus on particular group of pupils, are children being challenged?
- Current needs and focus of school, e.g. problem solving sentence construction
 - Area of improvement identified by staff – such as classroom as a learning environment, organisation
 - Children's responses
 - Relationships in the classroom, groupings, use of support staff

How should it be observed?

- Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher
- SLT/LILT
- Governors
- Subject Leaders
- Teachers within peer observation programme
- Individually
- Graded (if appropriate – e.g NQTs students etc)
- Standardised pro-forma;

How should feedback be given?

- Feed-back should be as soon as possible, but aiming to be within 24 hours
- Team leaders and/or subject leaders
- Verbal or written;
- Fair and supported by evidence and OfSTED evaluation schedule and Teaching Standards
- Identify the strengths, improvements, how they could be achieved;
- Relaxed professional atmosphere; Focus on issues not the person; should be a dialogue
- Feed-back on standardised form – copy for teacher, observer and Headteacher

In the pursuit of good or outstanding teaching, the basis of the school's classroom monitoring policy is that:

Any lesson observed that is found to be either in need of improvement or inadequate will automatically trigger a follow-up observation within 2 weeks. A programme of coaching support will be planned alongside agreed targets for improvement, ensuring teachers feel confident in addressing the development points identified by the observer. If practice does not improve, a more detailed plan of support will be implemented and closer monitoring supporting the teacher in making the improvements needed. If an individual teacher is unable to deliver teaching that is good or better, they will then be managed under the school's procedures for capability.

Observations will also happen for other reasons. Curriculum Managers will need to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their own subjects to ensure that standards are in line with

expectations. These observations will be planned in consultation with staff. Governors can observe teaching and learning alongside a member of staff at planned times throughout the year. These will be part of their 'critical friend' role and not an evaluation of individual teacher's performance.

We also encourage colleagues have an opportunity to observe each other's practice outside of the monitoring cycle. These are called 'peer observations'. Individuals are able to choose the person they wish to observe and this is usually because the selected person has an area of strength which is of interest to the observer as they wish to develop this aspect of their practice. It is the teachers responsibility to arrange peer observations when they feel it is appropriate. We aim to ensure that the school promotes a culture where observation of practice is intrinsic to the life of the school, non-threatening, and completely synonymous with our pursuit of excellence. Any individual who is unhappy with the outcome of a monitoring procedure is able to raise this with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to resolve the difficulties. If the situation remains unresolved then the usual grievance procedure becomes the process to be followed.

Learning Support Assistants

During the year, the Headteacher and members of the Leadership Team may complete an observation of our Learning Support Assistants, as part of the School Development Plan and ensuring value for money. These will also support their performance management review. These will always be planned with the Learning Support Assistant and feedback given.

Types of Observation

There are two types of observation: Formal and Informal

Formal - i.e. These are carried out for performance, NQT assessment, competency procedures of similar. They are concerned with judgements that will influence career and pay progressions

Informal - i.e. Those for teacher's professional development and those forming part of the internal monitoring system. They are concerned with non-judgemental support. Peer observations, learning walks and 'drop-in' observations are also considered to be informal.

Formal Observations

- Usually carried out by SLT or those with a specific leadership role
- Dates and times are agreed at least 5 days in advance
- The focus is agreed in advance and this will guide the feedback
- The observer should arrive in the classroom in plenty of time and the observation would last for the duration of the lesson
- There is no expectation that a separate lesson plan is provided
- The teacher should provide a copy of their planning which has guided the learning to this point and relevant assessment of pupils or groups should also be available where appropriate
- The observer should not interfere with the flow of the lesson or the teaching
- Discussions with children about their learning should be done at appropriate points in the lesson

- The agreed School Lesson Observation Feedback sheet (see appendix) should be used to record all formal observations. This focuses on the 7 key areas taken from Chris Quigley 'How to Observe a Lesson' (see Appendix)
 - Assessment
 - Marking
 - Checking
 - Teaching
 - Basic Skills
 - Attitudes
 - Progress
- Again the main agreed focus of the lesson should guide the feedback
- Alongside these 7 key areas, it is expected that there will also be an opportunity to record and feedback more general observations
- Verbal feedback should be given as soon as possible, by the end of the following of possible and written feedback shared within 5 working days
- Ofsted gradings will not be given on individual lessons
- Teachers standards and Ofsted descriptors are helpful documents as a point of reference to help shape discussion and provide helpful, celebratory and developmental feedback
- Teachers are encouraged to comment on the feedback given.

Informal Observation

Subject Monitoring

- Subject leaders will carry out informal observations as part of their monitoring role, which will be recorded, in writing, for their subject leader files.
- Whilst constructive feedback should be offered, unless previously identified, this information is **not** used to inform performance management decisions
- It is expected that subject leaders will report generally to staff, sharing and identifying best practice, celebrating success and identifying development points which shape action plans

Learning Walks

- A learning walk is a structured walk through the classrooms of the school in order to collect information about teaching and learning, evidence of progress around the School Improvement Plan and to identify any further areas for development
- They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgemental
- At Stoke Park Infant School, teaching staff will be involved in planning for the learning walk, including dates, purpose or focus and arrangements for sharing feedback

Drop-Ins

- The headteacher and SLT retains the right to drop-ins to monitor the standard of teaching and learning at any time
- Drop-Ins are not formal observations and will normally be a visit of short duration
- Drop-Ins will be carried out as and when needed or required

When observations or indeed any other monitoring shows that teaching requires improvement, immediate support will be provided as described in our performance management policy

Training and Support for Observers

Staff undertaking observations should have received appropriate training on undertaking observations and providing feedback (e.g. student mentor training, NQT induction etc). Lesson observation moderation exercises, with a colleague, LLP or external consultant, may be organised from time to time by the headteacher.

NQTs

In accordance with the NQT induction process as laid down by Hampshire personnel

Governor Visits

Classroom and school visits take place to develop the governors understanding of the School Improvement Plan and to understand policy and implementation in school. At no time do governors judge the quality of teaching and learning. The school has agreed and adopted a Protocol for Governor Visits. It is the role of the headteacher, teaching staff and chair of governors to ensure that this is followed.

Appendix 1

How to Observe a Lesson – (Chris Quigley)



Progress The most important measure of teaching is its impact on progress. The best progress is highly visible, measurable, rapid and sustained across all subjects. This lens gives the final check as to whether the efforts of teaching bring benefits in learning.

The other six lenses are all factors that affect progress. The progress lens needs, therefore, to be used in conjunction with all of the other lenses. Each lens will be explored in relation to how it promotes and helps to reveal progress.

Assessment Whilst it is possible to make progress in almost anything, the assessment lens helps teachers to plan for progress for individuals in the right things, to the right, challenging standard. This lens concentrates mostly on lesson planning and its importance in focusing lessons on individual needs.

Checking The checking lens helps teachers to focus on the signs of progress during lessons. By continually checking on progress, teachers can maximise it and reshape their teaching as required.

Marking Progress is affected by the quality and frequency of feedback. Consistency of quality feedback helps pupils to know what they have done well and helps them to improve.

Teaching The methods that teachers use to promote progress for individuals are almost unlimited in number. This lens helps leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching methods used in maximising progress for all.

Basic skills Best thought of as the 'silent objective' of every lesson, the basic skills lens helps leaders to evaluate opportunities for developing reading, communication and mathematics in all lessons.

Attitudes The attitudes lens helps teachers to focus on the learning skills and behaviours of pupils. This lens helps leaders to identify how the traits of a competent learner are developed, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).

Appendix 2 – Lesson Observation Feedback Pro-Forma

Date:	Teacher:		Year:
Observer:		Focus/Context:	
	Strengths	Development Points	Agreed Action
Progress			
Assessment			
Checking			
Marking			
Teaching			
Basic Skills			
Attitude			
General Observations			