

# Great Orton Primary



## Observation Policy

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## Great Orton Primary School

### Observation Policy

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Great Orton Primary School Appraisal Policy.

Other documents referenced include:

- STPCD (2013)
- National Standards for Headteachers (2004)
- Teachers' Standards (2012).
- NUT Classroom Observation Guidance (2012)

Headteachers and Governing Bodies are required to organise classroom observation for a range of reasons and purposes. These are underpinned in a statutory context by:

- Appraisal Regulations
- The School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document (2013)
- National Standards for Headteachers (2004)
- Teachers' Standards (2012)

### Purposes of Lesson Observations

- To identify and disseminate good practice.
- To identify staff development needs.
- To contribute to CPD by providing opportunity for staff to reflect on their own practice and effectiveness and to develop their own skills.
- To provide evidence which contributes to the appraisal process.
- To support the internal monitoring of school improvement, policies, and procedures.
- To raise standards of teaching and learning.

### Our Ethos

At Great Orton Primary School we are committed to ensuring that lesson 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 an agreement in advance on how lesson observations are to be carried out;
- evaluate objectively;
- report accurately and fairly, and
- respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

## Categories of Observation

There are two types of observation:

### 1. Formal

i.e. those for Appraisal, NQT assessment, competency procedures or similar. They are concerned with judgements that will influence career and pay progression.

### 2. Informal

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

## Formal Observation

- These are usually carried out by those within the SLT or those with a specific leadership role.
- Dates and times are agreed at least five working days in advance.
- The focus of the observation must have been agreed in advance, usually in the initial appraisal meeting, and this should guide the feedback.
- The observer should arrive at the classroom in plenty of time and the observation should usually last for the whole 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 pupils about their learning should be done at appropriate points in the lesson.
- The agreed School Lesson Observation Feedback Sheet (Appendix 2) should be used to record all formal observations. This focuses on the following seven key areas taken directly from Chris Quigley's 'How to Observe a Lesson' (Appendix 1)
  - Assessment
  - Checking
  - Marking
  - Teaching
  - Basic Skills
  - Attitudes
  - Progress
- Again, the main agreed main focus of the lesson should guide the feedback.

- Alongside these seven 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 is possible, but by the end of the following day at the latest, with written feedback shared within five working days.
  - It is not expected that observers will provide an Ofsted grading on individual lessons.
  - However, the Teacher Standards and the 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 that they have received on the form provided.
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- *During the initial appraisal meeting, the Formal Observations that the appraisee can expect during the year will be discussed and agreed. It is these Formal Observations which will influence, alongside progress against objectives and ongoing performance against the Teacher Standards, whether a recommendation for pay progression should be made. (See Appraisal Policy.)*
  - *At Great Orton Primary School, we will endeavour to arrange classroom observations to fulfil a range of purposes where possible.*
  - *Staff may from time to time request further observations to support them with their work. This will usually be done through the Peer to Peer Coaching model. However, where staff request that this is undertaken by their line manager, time will be provided for line managers for this purpose.*

### 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 coordinator files.
- Whilst individual constructive feedback should be offered, unless previously identified within the appraisal meeting this information is **not** used to inform appraisal decisions.
- It is expected that subject leaders will report generally to the staff, sharing best practice, celebrating success, and identifying developmental points which help 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 school priorities, and to identify further areas for development.
- They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgemental.
- They do not, therefore, provide information for appraisal discussions.
- At Great Orton Primary School, teaching staff will be involved in planning for the learning walk, including dates, times, purpose or focus, and arrangements for sharing feedback.

## Drop Ins

- The Headteacher retains the right to drop-in to monitor standards of teaching and learning at any time.
- Drop-ins are not formal lesson observations and will normally be a classroom visit of short duration.
- Drop-ins will be carried out proportionate to need.

Observations, both formal and informal should (except where specific circumstances arise) be carried out on an equitable basis. In normal circumstances the number and frequency of observations should be the same for all staff.

Where observations, or indeed, any other monitoring shows that teaching requires improvement, immediate support will be provided as described in our school Appraisal Policy (2013).

## Observation Cycle

When?	Type?	By whom?	Focus?
Autumn 2	Formal lesson observation	Core Subject Leader.	Usually core subject based - relating to SIP priority as identified through self evaluation.
Spring 2	Formal lesson observation	Line Manager.	As agreed at initial appraisal meeting. In line with appraisal objectives.
Summer 2	Informal lesson observation	Core Subject Leader.	Review impact of subject specific Action Plans.

## Training and Support for Observers.

Staff undertaking observations should have received appropriate training on undertaking observations and providing feedback. Lesson observation moderation exercises with a colleague or external consultant may be organised from time to time by the Headteacher.

## Newly Qualified teachers

In line with statutory requirements, NQTs have at least one lesson observation each half term. These are arranged with the NQT mentor and carried out by the mentor, SLT member, or subject leader, as appropriate to the needs of the NQT.

## HLTA, STA, TAs.

- HLTAs, STAs, & TAs will usually be observed once a year by their line manager for the purposes of Appraisal.
- Again, these observations will be discussed and agreed with the staff member during the appraisal meeting.
- It is expected that HLTAs, STAs, and TAs will share good practice and engage in 'Peer to Peer' coaching and professional dialogue as part of their ongoing professional development.
- The Headteacher, other SLT member, or SENCo with delegated responsibility reserves the right to 'drop-in' during lessons.

## Record Keeping

- All lesson observation documentation will be held confidentially, and will be destroyed after six years.

## Peer Observation

At Great Orton Primary School, we believe that all teachers should have opportunity to engage in professional pedagogical discussion to develop their skills, separate from discussions around appraisal. We believe that peer observation is a powerful tool in developing our staff professionally, providing excellent opportunity for sharing, questioning, and understanding of pedagogy.

The outcomes of peer observation are **not** used to inform teachers' appraisal outcomes.

Feedback and key development points will remain confidential between the staff involved, the Peer to Peer lead within the SLT and the Headteacher, unless otherwise agreed by all parties. There may be times where it could be helpful for key learning to be shared with other staff, including subject leaders, but this will never be done without prior consent from all concerned.

*"Peer observation involves a teacher observing another teacher's practice. It is developmental. It involves teachers learning from each other. It offers first-hand experience and direct evidence about what happens in other classrooms. It is a practical and powerful way to support teachers' practice and knowledge about teaching and learning.*

*Peer observation works best when colleagues choose to work together on a voluntary basis, identifying and focusing on the issues they have agreed to address. It is a professional development activity."*

(NUT Classroom Observation Guidance 2012)

It is expected that all staff will undertake at least two visits to other classrooms during the academic year. These could be classrooms within school, within the Carlisle Schools' Partnership, or beyond.

Similarly, all teachers will extend the offer of two visits to their colleagues during the year. The Peer to Peer lead member of staff will facilitate these visits and keep records of visits and their outcomes.

### **Governor Visits to School**

At Great Orton Primary School, Governing Body members are attached to classes so as to build up a rapport with a group of pupils over time.

Classroom visits take place to develop Governors' understanding of the School Improvement Plan. At no time do Governors judge the quality of teaching. The school has agreed and adopted a Protocol for Governor Visits to School which has been agreed by all staff and Governors. It is the role of the Headteacher, the Teaching Staff Representative, and the Chair of Governors to ensure that this procedure is followed at all times.

*"Governor visits are different from informal and formal observations of lessons, as they are not statutorily required or professionally generated, therefore they do not fall within this classroom observation protocol.*

*Individual governors may wish to visit classrooms to become familiar with the school or to observe specific aspects of the curriculum. Such visits should always be by prior arrangement and follow procedures agreed and specified by the head teacher and the governing body following consultation with the teaching staff. Such procedures should specify that governor visits are not observations but visits. Governors should not evaluate the work of teachers. No report by a governor evaluating the work of a teacher or teachers should be presented to the governing body."*

(NUT Classroom Observation Guidance 2012)

A Governor visit to school to work with the class in their new classrooms takes place in the Autumn Term. A Governor visit to develop knowledge of key priorities within the SIP usually takes place during the Spring Term.

*This Policy was shared with and agreed by staff:*

*This Policy was ratified by the Governing Body:*

*It is to be reviewed annually alongside the schools' Appraisal Policy and Pay Policy.*

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: Example Lesson Observation Feedback Proforma**

Date:	Teacher:	Year:	
Observer:	Focus/Context:		
	Strengths	Areas for Improvement	Agreed Actions
Progress			
Assessment			
Checking			
Marking			
Teaching			
Basic Skills			
Attitudes			
General Obs:			

