

The Elite English School

Classroom Observations and Drop Ins Policy

Date : March 2019

Next Review Date : March 2020

1. Introduction:

The school and the Board of Governors are committed to ensuring high standards of teaching and learning and recognise the value of formal classroom observation, 'drop ins' and learning walks in enabling **effective quality assurance** throughout the school and **continuing professional development**.

We also recognise that, since the last policy was written, the school has moved on considerably in terms of its use of classroom observations, 'drop ins' and learning walks.

- The school's culture is such that teachers and students are accustomed to different staff and visitors popping into lessons.
- Staff and students take a pride in showing practice and work to different visitors.
- There is now a pre-published programme for 'drop ins' and learning walks in order to support quality assurance.
- Learning walks and paired observations are now an established part of our whole school CPD project.

2. Rationale:

Regardless of their purpose, our priority is to ensure classroom observations, 'drop ins' and learning walks are always

- developmental
- supportive
- linked to the school's improvement priorities.
- and contribute to the school's overall aim to provide teaching and learning that is *at least* 'good'.

Those involved in the process will:

- carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy
- seek to reach agreement in advance on classroom observation to be carried out
- evaluate objectively
- report accurately and fairly
- and respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

3. The policy in practice:

3.1. Classroom Observations:

In accordance with the principle outlined above, the SMT will:

- consult staff on the pattern of classroom observation which teachers can expect annually and seek agreement with the teachers on these arrangements. These **will not exceed three formal observations in any one year unless there are concerns about the performance of a colleague**. There may be circumstances where the teacher chooses to request a further observation. These will be honoured in order to support the development of their practice.
- ensure that there will be a reasonable amount of time between classroom observations, irrespective of the purpose of those observations;
- ensure that classroom observation will be undertaken solely by persons with the appropriate training and professional skills.
- ensure that as far as possible, the results of observations are used for multiple purposes, in order to restrict the number of observations carried out.

3.2. Preparation for observations:

- In keeping with the school's commitment to supportive and developmental classroom observation, the date and time of observations conducted for the purposes of performance management or for the evaluation of standards of teaching and learning (or for both purposes) will be fixed at least five working days in advance. Every effort will be made for observation to be conducted at an agreed time.
- Before any performance management observation is conducted, there will be an opportunity for reviewer and reviewee to meet in order that the context of the lesson to be observed can be discussed. Where there will be another teacher or a member of SMT present during a class which is to be observed, there will be consideration at this meeting of any necessary arrangements to be made.

3.3. Feedback and records

Oral feedback from classroom observation at a pre-arranged time for the purposes of performance management will be given as soon as possible after the observation and no later than the end of the following working day. *It is the responsibility of the colleague who has been observed to make sure this has occurred.*

Written feedback via copies of the lesson observation form will be provided within five working days of the observation taking place. The written record of feedback will include the date on which the observation took place, the lesson observed and the length of the observation.

The teacher will be able to append written comments to the feedback document. No written notes in addition to the written feedback will be kept.

Copies of the lesson observations will be kept in the school's server.

4. Learning Walks:

The purpose of a learning walk will be published in advance as per the school's monitoring programme. Feedback on the learning walk will be shared with colleagues.

Learning walks may be undertaken by any member of staff, but will usually be carried out by members of the SMT.

1. Students will not be asked for their views of an individual teacher during 'learning walks' but may be asked about their experience of learning.
2. There will be no evaluation of an individual teacher during a 'learning walk'. 'Learning walks' are intended to inform generic monitoring and evaluation of the day to day learning experience of children at our school.
3. Copies of paperwork pertaining to learning walks undertaken by members of SMT will be kept in their leadership files.
4. Regular reviews of the operation of 'learning walks' will be held with all staff.
5. Any concerns about the implementation of this protocol should be raised initially with the Principal either by the individual teacher concerned or with the support of his/her HOD.

5. 'Drop- Ins'

The school recognises that visits to classrooms by the Principal, SMT or peers in order to support teachers, improve practice or talk to students are separate from classroom observations.

The purpose of visits by senior staff or other colleagues to classrooms will be made clear before they occur. This will occur via:

- the published programme for monitoring and quality assurance
- notification of visits by external agencies by means of the email, and Whole Staff Briefings e.g. visits by the trainers, governors etc.

Likewise, the school's SENCO will need to be able to observe teachers, track students, look at behaviour issues and resources used in class. These observations will be planned and advanced notice will be given by the SENCO to the classroom teacher. Where such observations take place, the focus of the observation will **not** be the practice of the class teacher.

6. Governor Visits:

- These will always be pre announced and will be carried out according to the protocols laid down by the School.
- Governors will seek only to establish an overview of the day to day operations of the school. They will not evaluate or make judgements on teaching and learning or upon individual members of staff.
- Feedback on visits will be provided to staff. This will take the form of a generic overview arising out of their visit.