



# **SIR ROBERT PATTINSON ACADEMY**

## **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION POLICY**

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# CLASSROOM OBSERVATION POLICY

There are valid reasons why, as professionals, we should observe classroom practice:

- To share experience and best practice for the benefit of other professionals
- To see working examples of different techniques and methodologies – identify strengths in curriculum delivery
- To offer support where areas of practice are less than good
- To provide quality assurance so that evaluations of performance at all levels are accurate and lead to sustained improvement
- As part of performance management

The Academy is committed to ensuring that classroom observation is developmental and supportive and that those involved in the process will carry out the process with professionalism, integrity and courtesy.

Staff may have a person/people in their lessons for the following reasons:

1. Performance development
2. Learning walks
3. Professional development activity – coaching or training
4. Visitors to the Academy

## 1. Performance Development – Classroom Observations

The primary purpose of performance development observations is to provide constructive feedback to teachers, celebrating achievements and supporting development.

### General Classroom Observation Guidance:

- All classroom observations will be ‘no notice’ to observe typicality and to reduce work load and stress
- The length of the observation will range from 20 minutes to an hour.
- Most staff will have a minimum of two observations over the year.
- Additional classroom observations may be scheduled if evidence emerges which gives rise to concern about the appraisee's teaching performance. This could lead to a review meeting or in the minority of cases could lead to capability procedures.
- All observations used for performance development will be carried out by a teacher in a leadership position (SLT/HOD/LP/TLR holder).
- In order for the Academy to have an overview of the teacher's performance observations should take place with different Key Stages and across a range of abilities.

### Key Points for the Classroom Observation Process:

- The performance development process should highlight particular aspects of an appraisee's teaching and curriculum delivery that will be assessed during an observation.
- The **SRPA Observation Document** will always be used to provide written feedback

- A professional discussion will follow the observation. This should be a two way discussion using a coaching model. Progress, behaviour for learning of the students observed and strengths to share across the academy will be discussed.
- Areas to develop will also be discussed along with support and practical ideas for development. Proposed actions with timescales will be noted on the **SRPA Observation Document**.
- The appraiser will pass copies of the paperwork to the DHT, SLT line manager and HoD of the appraisee within 5 days of the observation.

For performance management observations the expectation of the teacher is to:

- highlight particular aspects of their teaching and curriculum delivery in their performance management that will be assessed during observations
- have an up-to-date teacher file, including an annotated seating plan and class data, available to share with the observer (see Quality of Education Handbook) to illustrate how the needs of the class are being met

Evidence gathered from classroom observation should be multi-purpose, providing monitoring information for a range of other necessary purposes, such as academy self-evaluation, professional learning and academy improvement as well as performance management.

Therefore performance development observations will:

- be available to line managers in a summarised form as part of Academy self-evaluation
- be kept by the DHT and SLT Curriculum / CPD Lead as part of the academy self-evaluation evidence and summaries of findings made available to wider audiences (e.g. governors, advisers, Ofsted)
- be carried out by an external visitors as part of a peer review or external review without the Head Teacher or designated member of staff (often as part of the quality assurance process). Note: only one performance development observation would be carried out by an adviser. The feedback from these observations would be in line with agreed academy policy.
- be at least 20mins in length

## **Supporting Staff**

If practise is observed that causes concern then the observer/line manager must act to support the member of staff. The premise must always be the performance in one lesson does not equate to the holistic performance for a teacher's practise overall. There must be a documented meeting led by the observer/line manager to discuss the lesson observed: its context, planning, delivery and any particular circumstances which may have affected it. It is important to determine how typical the lesson was of the colleague's practise. If the lesson is not typical and practise is usually good or better then professional judgement needs to be applied. Where practise is not typically good or better, then structured support such as coaching should be put in place and a **follow up observation carried out within a one week period**. If the member of staff continues to be of concern regarding their teaching and curriculum delivery additional forms of support can be implemented such as a Professional Improvement Plan.

## 2. Learning Walks

Learning walks contribute to the totality of assessing a teacher's performance. On occasions where learning walk observations provide evidence that shows a teacher is experiencing difficulties or there is evidence of low level misbehaviour, supportive action **must be** followed up by the observer. The person undertaking the observation should have a professional discussion with the member of staff to ascertain the context of the lesson and explore reasons for the concern and seek additional support if appropriate. **A follow up drop in observation should happen within one week.**

Additional observations may be in the form of learning walks for:

- Departmental QA
- House team QA
- Whole academy QA
- Peer review / External review

### Key Points for Learning Walks

- They will be linked to the academy improvement plan and details of exact days and times should not be expected, although general timings can be shared with staff.
- Learning walks will provide individual feedback wherever possible.
- Evidence and information gained from learning walks should be shared with Middle Leaders through generalised reports.
- Observers will be as unobtrusive as possible but may look at students' work or speak to students if appropriate.

## 3. Observation as part of Professional Development

Peer or coaching observations may take place as part of teachers' professional learning. These may either be identified at the planning stage or agreed during the year. The appraisee may identify the notes from these observations as evidence to bring to the performance management review meeting; however the observer must not share the information from the observation without the permission of the appraisee.

Some staff may be observed by trainee teachers or staff shadowing a student, with the explicit agreement of the teacher being observed. These visits are not professional observations and are not part of the performance management process or judgement of the teacher.

## 4. Visits by Governors or Other Visitors

Whenever possible, staff will be informed about visitors to the Academy.

Governors may visit classrooms to become familiar with or to observe specific aspects of the academy. These visits are not professional observations and are not part of the performance management process or judgement of a teacher.

There may also be times when the Senior Leadership Team, members of staff or students are accompanying visitors around the Academy e.g. parents, students. These visits are not professional observations or part of any performance management process.

### **Training in Lesson Observations**

All staff undertaking observations should have access to appropriate internal training on undertaking observation and providing feedback. Staff will also be trained in the performance management processes and be given the opportunity to work alongside other observers as part of the training and moderation process.