



THE MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL

School Improvement Committee

Monitoring the Quality of Teaching and Learning Policy

November 2023

Review Date: November 2026

Company No. 07560175

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Commented [SL1]: Requires updating

At The Mountbatten School we know that high quality teaching and learning is key to student progress. We believe that monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by undertaking a range of activities such as lesson observation, student progress reviews and learning walks provides a chance to:

- develop teachers' pedagogy;
- recognise and share good practice;
- identify areas for improvement that can inform professional development;
- foster a climate of professional reflection;
- provide ongoing feedback to teachers and leaders;
- gather evidence for Appraisal and school improvement cycles.

Quality assurance activities are therefore an important way of ensuring consistently high quality teaching and learning throughout the school, monitoring the implementation of school policies and checking that the needs of all students are met.

In order to assess the quality of teaching and learning over time, we will also draw on evidence including, though not confined to:

- data related to student achievement and progress;
- learning displayed in books and classwork;
- student feedback.

Conducting a lesson observation

As a school, we make a commitment to conduct lesson observations in a way that is professional, supportive and developmental.

We recognise that observations only provide evidence of a particular moment in time, and will not necessarily include many other aspects of successful teaching. For the observation to be both meaningful and developmental, the observer must meet with the observee to decide on the focus of the observation. In most cases, this will be the same as the pedagogy Appraisal objective. The observer may also look at progress data, assessment and feedback, work in books and the views of students in order to evaluate the quality of teaching over time in relation to the decided focus.

We expect observers to respect the confidentiality of the information gained, and evaluate the teaching as objectively as possible.

Observees should feel involved and supported throughout the observation process. It should be part of a professional conversation and the appropriate atmosphere for any observation is constructive and non-threatening.

Verbal feedback from the lesson observation will always be given as soon as possible after the observation, preferably within 48 hours. Written feedback should follow thereafter, within 5 working days of the lesson observation taking place.

The written record of feedback should include the focus of the observation, the date on which it occurred and the developmental feedback related to the focus (strengths and areas for development). The teacher being observed should be able to add their comments to the written document, and access the record freely.

Categories of observation

We use four types of classroom observation.

1. **Pedagogy focused observations.** These are held primarily for the teacher's professional development and the sharing of good practice across the school. They are non-judgmental and undertaken for the development of both reviewer and reviewee. Typically, they would be used to share examples of good practice and to identify areas for whole school improvement.

2. **Performance related observations.** These are used for ECT and trainee assessment, and capability procedures. They will form part of the evidence for judgements influencing career and pay progression, and will be taken with the wider picture of the teacher's performance over time.

3. **Learning walks.** These are held to give a snapshot of teaching practice across the school. They focus on whole-school points for development rather than individual practice, and are not used for performance management.

4. **Drop-in and coach observations.** These are frequent, brief and have a single focus. They often form part of an ongoing development programme.

Pedagogy focused lesson observations

Lesson observations are an essential tool for sharing good practice across the school, and providing every teacher with a chance to learn and develop their teaching. To this end, we encourage and use a variety of types of informal observations, for example: drop-in observations, open classroom policies, video observation technologies, lesson study, peer observations, teaching triads.

These observations can be part of the school's planned cycle of observation or might be arranged between observer and observee at their mutual convenience. We actively encourage staff to take part in peer observations like these to develop their practice and get inside others' classrooms as part of our CPD programme.

Performance related lesson observations

We conduct lesson observations for the purpose of ECT and trainee assessments, and also capability procedures. Teachers may request additional formal lesson observations if they desire. Additional observations are also likely to occur if there is cause for concern over a teacher's performance.

ECTs will be formally observed at least once per term during each ECT induction year. The observer will make a judgement on the quality of teaching over time which must include the progress of the students and the quality of assessment and feedback. Teachers should be given at least 1 working days' notice of an observation and told the focus in advance.

All comments and evaluations should be recorded in the school's lesson observation record sheet.

We may also conduct graded lesson observations for the purpose of capability procedures.

If teaching over time for one class is judged to be inadequate or requires improvement or if a lesson gives cause for concern, our standard procedure is to first establish with the member of staff whether this is a fair representation of their practice. If this is reflective of their general teaching, we will put in place a targeted action plan. This would focus on providing access to good practice across the school, mentoring and coaching as well as any relevant professional development. It would also include graded lesson observation to ensure that all teaching is at least good. The observer will make a judgement on the quality of teaching over time which must include the progress of the students and the quality of assessment and feedback. Teachers should be given at least one working days' notice of an observation and told the focus in advance.

Initial targets for improvement are then reviewed in a follow-up observation. If practice has not been improved, then a more detailed intervention will be put in place. Further observations may take place in support of that member of staff. Any monitoring should be proportionate to the needs of the individual.

Any formal proceedings will follow the school's capability policy.

Learning walks

Learning walks allow us to get a snapshot of teaching across the school and gather evidence of staff development needs. These should not be used for performance management or focus explicitly on the performance of an individual; their purpose is for whole-school improvement and to assess the quality of teaching over time in the school.

- Learning walks will assess the quality of whole-school teaching, normally focusing on a particular aspect of practice.
- Individual teachers will not be named in any report produced as the result of a learning walk.
- Learning walks should aim not to disrupt either students or teachers unduly.

Drop-in and coach observations

Drop-in and coaching sessions are short, focused and developmental. Feedback takes place on the same day and is focused on a single improvement point, which is followed up at the next observation. Written feedback is generally limited to a brief paragraph.

Student Progress Reviews

Student Progress Reviews allow us to review the work and progress of classes as well as providing every teacher with a chance to learn and develop their teaching.

These reviews are part of the school's planned calendar of quality assurance activities. The review is part of the directed time allocation and should be arranged between reviewer and reviewee at their mutual convenience. The reviewee should provide the reviewer with access to the work of two of their classes (one Upper School and one Lower School and the classes should be of different abilities). The review will look at the progress of students as recorded in a teacher's mark book and in the students' classwork and should be a professional dialogue which identifies areas of good practice as well as providing self-reflection and discussion of ways in which teachers can develop their practice.

A written record of the review should be given to the teacher within 5 working days of the review taking place.

Policy approved by the School Improvement Committee Date:

Signed: _____ Date:

Vice-Chair of School Improvement Committee

Signed: _____ Date:

Chair of Trustees

Commented [SL2]: Just to enquire why the vice-chair of SIC is approving this policy where other SIC policies are approved by the chair of SIC.

