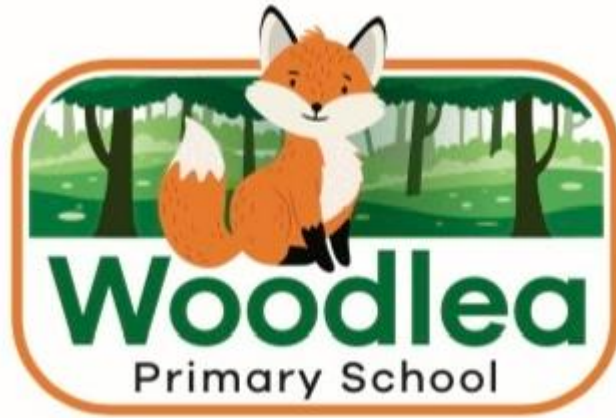




Classroom Observation Policy

Date written	July 2024 and reviewed September 2025
Written by	Abigail Oliver Headteacher
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Based on the Hampshire Model Classroom Observation Policy 2023

Purpose

This document sets out the framework for a clear and consistent approach to lesson observation, but the principles apply to all forms of task observation. It sets out the governing body commitments, the headteacher duties and the responsibilities of both the headteacher and school staff in respect of observation.

Observation for performance management and professional development purposes

1. A supportive and developmental process

- 1.1 The headteacher and governing body has a duty of care to staff in the school and as such is committed to ensuring that all observation, including classroom observation in this school will be a supportive and developmental process. Observation will be undertaken in the spirit of openness and transparency and in a manner which allows for professional dialogue. Those involved in carrying out the role will:
- ❖ carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
 - ❖ evaluate objectively;
 - ❖ report accurately and fairly;
 - ❖ share and celebrate good practice; and
 - ❖ respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

2. Planning for performance management observations

- 2.1 Arrangements for observation will be discussed in the performance management planning meeting and the employee and their reviewer should seek to reach agreement in respect of the detailed arrangements for performance management observations.
- 2.2 It is best practice to detail where evidence, including that from observations will be used to evaluate whether a maximum of three objectives have been met and standards reached.
- 2.3 The employee and reviewer may find it helpful to bring together a summary of all observations for performance management purposes.
- 2.4 There should be a reasonable amount of time in between individual observations for performance management purposes. Whilst 'reasonable' is a matter for interpretation, there should be sufficient time between performance management observations to enable development related to the area of focus to have taken place.
- 2.5 In planning for performance management, the school will ensure that sufficient directed time is available to enable performance management to operate effectively.

3. Notification of observation

- 3.1 Employees must be given notification of any observations for performance management purposes. In this school, employees will normally be given at least 5 working days' notice of observation.

4. Amount of classroom observation for performance management purposes

- 4.1 In determining the amount of observation for performance management purposes, due regard to the need to seek to balance the requirement to assess performance against enabling each individual to focus on carrying out their duties.
- 4.2 In this school there is 3-hour limit on the total amount of formal classroom observation for performance management purposes per cycle (year) that may be undertaken. Where performance concerns arise during the performance management cycle, it may be necessary to increase the number of observations as a means to assess whether improvements are being made. This is addressed further in paragraph 8.1.

5. Observer preparation

- 5.1 Classroom observation of teachers will always be carried out by those with QTS.
- 5.2 Observers will have undertaken adequate preparation and have the appropriate professional skills to undertake such observation and to provide constructive feedback in accordance with paragraph 6.
- 5.3 The headteacher will ensure that measures are put in place to ensure the consistent application of performance standards.

6. Feedback following observation

- 6.1 This school believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is an important way of assessing the performance of classroom-based employees in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have. Therefore, feedback from lesson observations will be developmental and not simply a judgement.
- 6.2 In accordance with the statements in 5.2 and 6.1, both observation and feedback will be undertaken in a supportive and constructive manner.
- 6.3 As soon as practicable after an observation, and within one working day, verbal feedback will be given to the employee. The observer will give due consideration to the suitability of the environment and time available in providing the feedback. Verbal feedback will be constructive and delivered in a manner which promotes professional dialogue.
- 6.4 Verbal feedback will be followed up by written feedback within 5 working days of the observation taking place.
- 6.5 Whilst a grading system may be used, written feedback will not be limited to a judgement and will be evaluative, describing strengths and areas for professional development and training as appropriate.
- 6.6 Where, in exceptional circumstances (e.g. due to illness of individual providing feedback, Ofsted inspection notification etc.), it is not practicable to provide feedback within the timescales outlined in paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4, feedback will be provided at the earliest opportunity thereafter. Feedback must be given before the next observation takes place.
- 6.7 The written feedback should include a date on which the observation took place and the lesson or task observed.

- 6.8 The employee should be given the opportunity to provide their own written comments either on the observation form, or as an appendix to the form. Due consideration should be given to the comments provided by the individual.
- 6.9 Where an individual recognises that an aspect of the lesson/activity did not go planned, the school may give consideration, on the first occasion, to enabling an individual to recognise this and request that the individual come back again to re-observe.
- 6.10 Where issues emerge from an observation that were not part of the focus of the observation, these should also be fed back to the employee both orally and in writing. If the issues that emerge highlight a concern, these must be shared and documented in the written feedback and the appropriate action discussed with the employee.
- 6.11 Employees will have a right to access all written accounts of the observation and copies should be provided.
- 6.12 It is recognised that observations are a snapshot in time and reviewers will use the information gathered from each observation alongside other types of relevant evidence to make overall judgements about performance.

7. Peer Observation for Professional Development Purposes

- 7.1 Peer observation is the term to describe the process in which a colleague is invited to observe and give feedback on teaching as part of their professional development. It is not normally part of formal performance management as it involves individuals, particularly teachers learning from each other. It is predominantly designed to:
- ❖ facilitate dissemination and sharing of expertise in teaching and learning
 - ❖ increase opportunities for discussion about teaching
 - ❖ lead to improved practice through a collegial and supportive approach
- 7.2 Staff in this school are encouraged to participate in peer reviews for their professional development. The opportunity to participate in peer reviews should be discussed in the performance management meeting, although evidence from peer reviews will not be used as evidence against objectives in their performance management.
- 7.3 Where peer observation is undertaken, both the observer and colleague being observed must prepare for the review, being clear of the focus of the observation. The observer will ensure that feedback is given in a positive and constructive manner. However, the person who receives the feedback, must stay in charge of the feedback as the process is being undertaken for them, for their benefit.

8. Performance concerns

- 8.1 Where the reviewer identifies concerns regarding the reviewee's performance, they will discuss this with a member of the senior leadership team and a decision will be made as to whether the reviewer role is re-delegated. Where such concerns arise, the reviewer will engage in professional discussion with the reviewee and make a decision on how to progress the concerns. In the majority of cases, a concern will lead to management support being provided, but in exceptional instances (e.g. where there are fundamental concerns, for example regarding the health, safety and welfare of children or staff) there may be immediate referral to the Capability Procedure.
- 8.2 Individuals and their reviewers need to be aware that where concerns arise, it will be normal practice to put a programme of management support in place, with a programme of additional monitoring observations

which will be discussed with the individual. The additional observations may be arranged in addition to those recorded at the beginning of the cycle.

- 8.3 Observations undertaken by Ofsted inspectors or as a result of local authority monitoring, will not be used for performance management purposes. However, these observations may highlight the need for the school to undertake separate observations for performance management purposes. Observations undertaken by a local authority officer may in exceptional circumstances, be used in performance management where this has been planned and communicated to all parties in advance.

Observation for monitoring and other purposes

A headteacher has a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning on a continuous basis and to ensure that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained throughout the school.

In order to keep observation to a minimum, the information gathered through the performance management process may be used, as appropriate, for a variety of quality assurance purposes, including informing the school self-evaluation and school improvement strategies.

However, the headteacher may decide that it is necessary to collect additional evidence as their professional judgement determines and this may include additional observations including drop in visits, the number and duration of which it is for the headteacher to determine.

Where possible, notice of additional observations and advice on the context of the observation should be given. However, it may not be practicable to provide employees with specific advance notice of every monitoring activity that is carried out for purposes other than performance management. For drop in observations, normal practice will be to notify that a particular year group or subject area may be observed at some time in a particular week.

Where the Headteacher identifies an issue of concern during a quality assurance observation, the Headteacher must share these with both the teacher and their reviewer. The reviewer will then meet with the teacher to discuss appropriate action.

Governors will not undertake lesson observations linked to the quality of teaching/for performance management purposes, even if the governor is an education professional. However, governors will undertake lesson drop ins in order to familiarise themselves with their link area and to appreciate how aspects of the provision are delivered to assist them in their governance role and providing support and challenge to the school leadership. Governors should either directly or via the Headteacher, arrange such observations in consultation with the staff involved.