

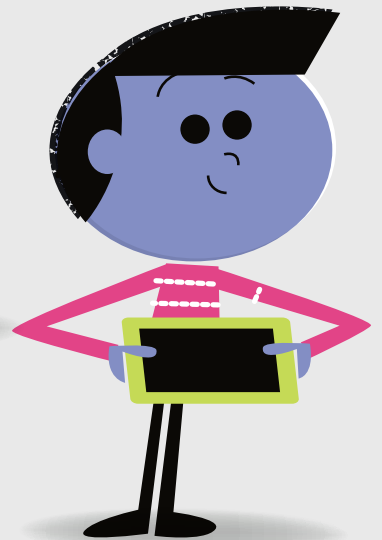
 Pathways

Revised
and updated
2017

A Guide to Lesson Observation

Tools and support for observing
lessons effectively

Written by Janet Brennan



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About the author

Janet Brennan was a teacher, a teacher trainer and a primary English adviser in a large local authority, before spending 14 years as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in Ofsted. She now works independently: writing, visiting schools, and providing advice to government departments.



Who is this guide for?

This guide has been developed with middle leaders in mind, but we hope it will be useful for other people, too. Observers might be headteachers, other senior leaders, middle leaders or teachers, including teachers from another school, all depending on the purpose of the observation. This guide aims to provide tools and advice to support and improve lesson observation, since good-quality lesson observation, judgement and feedback are at the heart of school improvement.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

There are several reasons for observing lessons, but the need to improve pupils' learning will be at the heart of every observation in your school. This means that judgements on the quality of the teaching should always be related to how well that teaching helps *all* pupils to learn and make progress, because improved learning is directly linked to improved teaching.

“Classroom observation can be an important tool in raising standards through supporting practitioners in sharing and developing their skills and so improving outcomes for learners.”¹

Welsh Government

Why observe?

The four main reasons for carrying out lesson observation in your school could be summarised like this:

Purpose of lesson observation:	Achieved through:	Observers are:
Internal purposes: focus on improvement		
→ to improve pupils' learning and the quality of teaching	informal observation, feedback and discussion, with a focus on continuing professional development and coaching This can include Lesson Study and peer observation.	internal: peers, line managers, subject leaders, senior leaders external: teachers visiting <i>from</i> other schools external: your visits <i>to</i> other schools
→ to evaluate the quality of teaching as a whole in your school	observation, feedback and discussion, with a focus on high quality and consistency: year groups, key stages and whole school	internal: peers, line managers, senior staff
→ to hold teachers to account	formal performance management/ appraisal as well as monitoring	internal: senior leaders, line managers
External purposes: focus on accountability		
→ to hold schools to account	inspection by Ofsted	external: Ofsted

This guide focuses mainly on the use of lesson observation as a tool for professional development, but it also says something briefly about Ofsted.

Governors of the school will also want to observe lessons from time to time to improve their awareness of the day-to-day running of the school. Governors are unlikely to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in your classroom – this is not their role and they are unlikely to be qualified to do so. The National Governors' Association provides a governor's visit exemplar policy and form through the [NGA website](#) for members.



What does the research say?

Lesson observation for school improvement

A report published by McKinsey in 2007 looked at the world's top-performing school systems.²

The McKinsey report identified three drivers behind high-performing school systems, but it also said that three other things needed to happen for schools to be really effective. The report said that individual teachers needed to do the following:

- "become aware of specific weaknesses in their own practice
- gain understanding of specific best practices
- be motivated to make the necessary improvements".

Lesson observation for professional development

A report sponsored by Oxford University Press in 2012 supports the theme of the McKinsey report in terms of the importance of focused professional development. *What professional development makes the most difference to teachers?* analysed and summarised findings from 35 studies of professional development.

These studies provided evidence that the teacher development that makes a difference:

- is concrete and classroom-based
- brings in expertise from outside the school
- involves teachers in the choice of areas to develop and activities to undertake
- enables teachers to work collaboratively with peers
- provides opportunities for mentoring and coaching
- is sustained over time
- is supported by effective school leadership.³

Effective leaders improve teaching by developing staff – the weakest teachers as well as the very best. They support all of them to teach more effectively and, critically, they also make sure that senior and middle managers learn how to develop others.

Case Study

Oldway Primary School*

Two inspection reports on Oldway Primary School show professional development linked to lesson observation in action very well.

In 2009, Ofsted's inspectors wrote:

“One reason for the continuing high quality of teaching has been the school's unremitting focus on the professional development of all staff. They regularly undertake high levels of research and engage in professional discourse. The school's classroom organisation further encourages staff to plan and assess as a team and to share their expertise both within the school and with other schools.”

See how the school organises each teacher's training plan and links this to observations from lessons on [pages 18–22](#) of this guide.

In 2013 inspectors visited the school again. On both occasions, they judged it to be outstanding.⁴

* Oldway Primary became Oldway Academy in 2015 but you can still read the predecessor school's reports on [Ofsted's website](#).



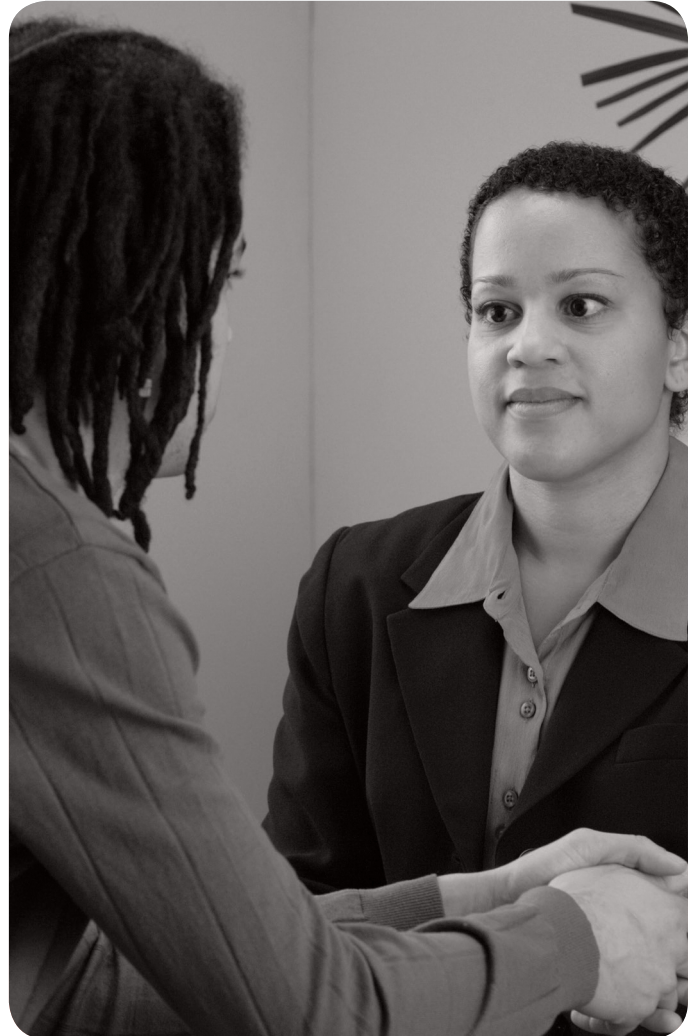
What are the implications of the research for observing lessons?

Lesson observations provide you with knowledge of the teaching and learning in your school. The more your school knows itself, the better placed it is to improve. Ofsted uses the evidence from lesson observation – both its own observations and those the school has carried out – as a vital part of inspection.

The research suggests that for successful lesson observation:

1. Teachers need to know what their weaknesses are in order to help them to improve, and they need direct support to help them to do so.
2. Feedback has to be specific to each teacher, focused on what their strengths and weaknesses are rather than general exhortations to improve.
3. There needs to be discussion of clear actions that will be taken – by everyone involved – to improve the teaching for next time. This should be true whether the context is formal performance management/appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of specific school improvement initiatives or peer observation for professional development.
4. Whatever support, training or coaching takes place has to be precise enough for teachers to apply the learning successfully in their own classrooms.

These points apply to peer observation, too. In that case, it is more likely that the observer (rather than the teacher being observed) will be the one who needs to discuss actions on the basis of what she or he has learned from watching the lesson (see point 4).



Part 1: Lesson observation support

Five simple steps to lesson observation

Step 1: Prepare and plan

Make sure that you are clear why you are observing and what will happen to your findings.

Ask for the lesson plan. While inspectors certainly do not expect teachers to prepare lesson plans specifically for the inspection, there are good reasons why a teacher might prepare a plan if a lesson is to be observed:

- to clarify the objectives of the lesson and to comment on any assessments that have fed into it
- to explain the lesson's structure, i.e. how it will unfold
- to show how it fits into a longer sequence of lessons and to explain what the children have done previously
- to explain the different groupings and to identify children who might need particular support
- to explain the roles of other adults (teaching assistants (TAs), trainees, volunteers/parents).

Step 2: Observe

Arrive at the time you agreed. Observe and be sensitive. Leave your preconceptions at the classroom door and watch with an open mind. Remember that you are there to see how well the children are learning and how the teaching contributes to that.

How long a lesson observation takes depends on:

- the focus of the observation: for instance, it might be a 15-minute phonics session or a 45-minute mathematics lesson
- whether the observation is part of a wider set of observations, say, across all the key stage 1 classrooms
- the purpose of the observation: for instance, it might be a follow-up observation, a peer observation or formal performance management
- whether it has been agreed that the whole lesson or only part of it will be observed.

The school's policy should make it clear how long observations should take in different contexts. See a sample policy on [page 12](#) of this guide.

Effective observation focuses on whether all the things that the teacher is doing are making a difference to children's learning.

In its 2009 report, *Twenty outstanding primary schools – excelling against the odds*, Ofsted listed “a number of common features of outstanding teaching and learning”.⁵ It drew these together from analysing the individual inspection reports of the 20 schools. The features included:

- stimulating and enthusiastic teaching
- high expectations of what pupils can do
- consistency in the quality of teaching across each school
- development of pupils' good learning habits
- highly structured approaches to reading, writing and mathematics, with some grouping by ability
- well-planned lessons
- a stimulating classroom environment
- frequent praise and a valued reward system
- well trained and deployed TAs
- a close check on learning during lessons, with effective marking and assessment.

There is nothing listed here that would not still be true now. These features feed into the 'Questions for Observers' tool that you can find on [page 9](#) of this guide. Try asking yourself the questions while you are observing.

Remember that the children should be working harder than the teacher. If they are not, reflect on what they *are* doing. Come to a judgement about how engaged you think they are and whether they are *all* making progress in their learning.

Step 3: Record

Make notes while you are watching.

How you record what you see will depend on:

- what you are looking for and the extent to which there is a specific focus for the observation
- what you are going to use the information for later
- whether other people are doing similar observations, in which case a consistent approach would be very useful because it would help to draw all the evidence together.

Some observers make notes during the lesson and then write up a more formal account later.

A wide range of formats/templates is available for recording observations. You might prefer to develop a format that suits your specific purposes, perhaps basing it on useful features from Ofsted's evidence form. Here are examples of forms that you might want to use or adapt for your own school:

- [Page 14](#) Pathways Lesson Observation Form
- [Page 18](#) Oldway Primary School's Lesson Observation Form

Step 4: Evaluate

Provide oral and written feedback promptly, honestly, constructively and sensitively.

Feedback after observation is a fundamental part of the whole process. It is important that this is managed very carefully and sensitively, especially if the lesson had any weaknesses. It should:

- be clear and specific to that lesson
- be developmental and action-focused
- be sensitive and honest.

Clearly, it is much easier to give feedback on a good or outstanding lesson than it is to give feedback on one that needs to be improved. See the suggestions on [page 10](#) for giving difficult feedback.

However, just because it is easier to give positive feedback, this does not mean that it should not be done thoughtfully. Teachers who teach good and outstanding lessons also value suggestions as to how their teaching might improve. In fact, they are often the keenest to listen.

Feedback should be specific to the lesson, focused on what you saw and not comment on things you have observed at some other time.

In your feedback, be clear about what the teacher should do next to improve the children's learning – remember that improving the learning is the important aspect, not improving the teaching for the sake of it. Be specific about the actions that are needed – something that the teacher can genuinely focus on and that you can look for next time you observe.

With peer observation, you might want to also draw on what you have learned and discuss ideas about teaching methods and strategies.

Step 5: Act on your findings

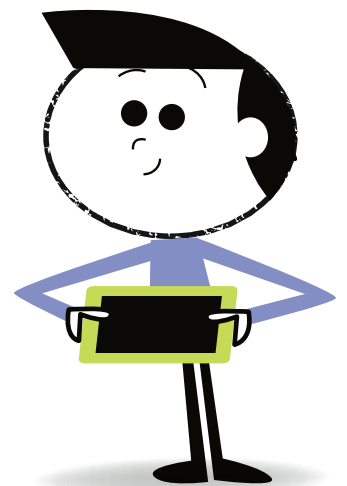
Provide support, training and coaching, and disseminate the good practice.

Act on the findings in two ways:

- provide support, training and coaching for the teacher whom you have observed
- share the good practice you have seen so that others can learn from it.

Think about who else might support the improvements that you want to see. Most of the responsibility will be the teacher's, but senior managers have a role to play in ensuring that support, coaching and professional development happen.

With peer observation you might want to add any new ideas to your lesson planning, you might discuss the experience with your line manager and you might want to arrange for a colleague to observe your class if appropriate.



Ofsted and lesson observation

Why does Ofsted observe lessons?

Ofsted's inspectors observe lessons to:

- find out how well all pupils are learning and making progress, especially in the core subjects, including judging their behaviour and attitudes and how well they apply their literacy and numeracy skills
- judge how the teaching contributes to this
- identify ways in which teaching and learning might be improved
- contribute to judgements about pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

"Inspectors will visit lessons to gather evidence about teaching, learning and assessment and will consider this first-hand evidence alongside documentary evidence about the quality of teaching and views from leaders, governors, staff, pupils and parents. Inspectors will also include evidence from observing pupils learning in, for example, extra-curricular activities."⁶

Ofsted inspectors do not observe lessons to judge a teacher's performance. Inspectors do not give grades for the quality of teaching or outcomes in the lessons they visit or grade the individual lessons.

'Joint observations'

Joint observations are one of several pieces of evidence that inspectors use. By observing lessons with the headteacher and senior/middle leaders, and having discussions with them, inspectors can also judge how accurately senior leaders and other teachers are evaluating teaching at the school because they compare the school's judgements with the inspection team's judgements. This is one of the reasons why inspectors invite senior leaders to observe lessons with them: 'joint observations'. Involving leaders helps them to sharpen their own observation and monitoring skills, so contributing to longer-term school improvement.⁷

Ofsted's guidance to inspectors about feedback

Ofsted provides very direct guidance for its inspectors on what they should and should not do in terms of giving feedback:

“Inspectors must not provide an overall grade for the lesson or for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or outcomes. The headteacher is responsible for advising staff that the feedback will not be used by the school for performance management purposes; it is provided in confidence.”⁸

The *School inspection handbook* also notes:

“Inspectors must offer feedback to teachers. Feedback may take a variety of forms, at the discretion of inspectors, such as one-to-one or discussions with groups of observed teachers or with whole staff groups.... These discussions should encourage a dialogue between the inspector and teacher about the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching observed, the context of the lesson and how the lesson fits into the pupils' programme of learning.”⁹

Observation and performance management

Paragraph 59 of Ofsted's *School inspection handbook* makes it clear that

“... Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning, whether joint or otherwise, must not be used [by the headteacher and governors] as evidence in capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.”¹⁰

Governors

The *School inspection handbook* says that inspectors will evaluate 'how well leaders ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff to deliver a high quality education for all pupils, and how effectively governors hold them to account for this'. Inspectors will also consider whether governors 'understand the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of pupils currently in the school' (paragraphs 141 and 148).¹¹

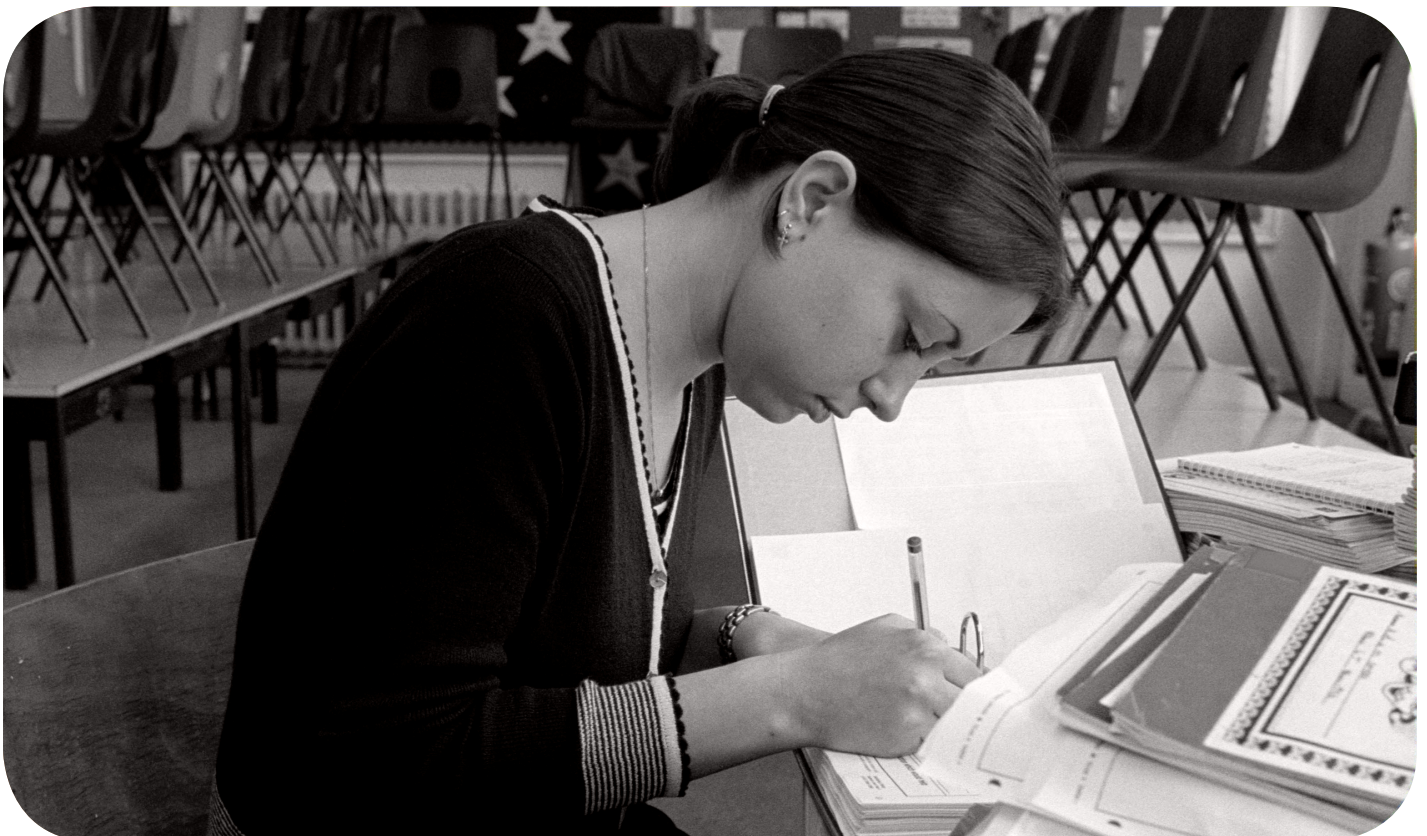
Other sources of information and training

Lesson Study

Lesson Study is a type of action research that originated in Japan, but has now spread widely. It uses lesson observation in a very focused, collaborative way to contribute to professional development and school improvement. You can find out a lot more about Lesson Study here: <http://lessonstudy.co.uk/>

Teaching Schools

Teaching Schools in England are all outstanding schools, so you can be virtually certain that they have excellent systems for lesson observation. A key part of their role is to support other schools, including with professional development. They also broker arrangements with other schools in their network, so they are a very good place to look for help. To help you find the ones nearest you, here is the latest list of all the teaching schools, with a map: www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/docinfo?id=154985&filename=teaching-schools-designations.pdf



Part 2: Tools for observers



Tool 1: Questions for Observers

Here are some useful questions to ask yourself while you are watching the lesson:

Questions

- Does the teacher find out and build on what the children already know?
- Is the teacher revising and consolidating what children have learned previously?
- Are all the children clear what they are supposed to be learning and what will happen at different points in the lesson? That is, do they have a sense of the shape of the lesson?
- Are teaching strategies effective: discussion, explanation, questioning, demonstration, etc.? How good are these, particularly questioning?
- What is the quality of the teacher's subject knowledge?
- What is the quality of the activities that the teacher asks the children to do; how well do they take learning forward?
- How effectively do resources contribute, including other adults working in the classroom?
- How well does the teacher manage the time in the lesson and the pace of the learning?
- Are there genuine opportunities for assessment, reflection and for dealing with misconceptions and misunderstandings?
- What opportunities do the children have to apply learning from elsewhere, especially literacy and numeracy?
- Are *all* the children learning and making progress? Are any children or groups of children finding the work too difficult or too easy?
- What is behaviour like? Overall, how well is the classroom managed so that there is a culture of learning, independence and positive attitudes?

Talk to the children

To get the most out of your lesson observation, talk to the children about what they are doing and try to see the lesson through their eyes. You should not really need to see the lesson plan to know what the teacher is trying to teach and if you cannot work it out from what you are seeing and hearing, it is likely that the children will not know either. When you are thinking about your overall evaluation of the lesson, think back to what the children said to you: the ones who were struggling as well as the ones who were getting on really well.

TIP

Recording your findings on a lesson observation form will help you structure your feedback.

Do not be too eager to write. Watch and listen first of all to get a sense of how the lesson is going.

Tool 2: Managing Difficult Feedback: Ten Top Tips

Giving constructive feedback after an observation can be challenging; most people are often anxious about criticism. Here is some advice for line managers and middle leaders on managing difficult feedback effectively:

- 1. Thank the teacher.** It can be very stressful to have someone watching you teach, so thanking the teacher for the opportunity to observe is important and will set a positive tone to the feedback session.
- 2. Contextualise the feedback.** Remind the teacher that this was just one lesson at a specific time on a specific day and that is what you have been observing.

TIP

Teachers who feel under stress after an observation may try to explain why something happened in that particular lesson or in the work, behaviour and attitudes of particular pupils. Ask how they would handle something differently next time, if the same thing occurred.

- 3. Distinguish between one-off and longer-term difficulties.** The teacher might already have made this clear, particularly if it is about children's behaviour, for example: "That was typical of him/her"; "It's always the same in maths" or "She never usually behaves like that".
- 4. Give the teacher a chance to talk.** It is important for teachers to give their views – but make sure they listen to you, too. Engage them in listening and responding by asking questions about the pupils and their work.

TIP

Try to be as open as possible, but do not neglect to discuss the difficult points in the lesson:

"I thought child X had made excellent progress with their poem – once they settled down. Was that fairly typical of them?"

"What sorts of things do you think the children had learned by the end of the lesson? What about the [name a group]?"

"Do you think that anyone/any groups found it particularly difficult? If so, why?"

"What are the next steps for [name a group or specific children]?"

- 5. Depersonalise your feedback.** Make it clear that the children and their learning were the focus for observation and not the teacher. Be specific about what the children did/did not learn or achieve and explain why you think they could have done better.

TIP

Ask open questions that focus on the pupils and their learning:

"Talk to me about ..."

"How did child X get on when you introduced this topic last week?"

- 6. Make positive suggestions.** Suggest ways for improving the children's learning and focus on the difference the changes would make. You can move on later to formulating these as action points for the teacher. What you are trying to do is to encourage the teacher to decide and agree on the action points for themselves.

TIP

Here are some opening phrases that might be useful:

"Maybe you could ask a child to demonstrate? This might have the *effect* of ..."

"I wonder if a shorter introduction might help? It *might mean* that ..."

"Could you perhaps show more of the text on the whiteboard? The *result* might be that ..."

"Have you thought about ...? I wonder if this might *help to* ..."

Alongside the suggestions, offer support that would make a difference, even if it is something quite minor. In this way, you help to show that you are on the teacher's side in terms of wanting to improve the learning.

- 7. Be positive about the strengths of the lesson.** It is important to draw attention to the successful parts of the lesson. Wherever you can, use the strengths you observed in the lesson to help you give feedback on the weaknesses.

TIP

Focus on the way in which decisions about the teaching had an impact on the learning. For example:

“It was very effective when you asked the children to compare their answers before you discussed the problem. I noticed that every single child was involved and it also gave you a good chance to circulate. What other ways might there be to involve them more?”

“I liked the way you gave the group in the corner a choice of writing tasks. It immediately engaged them in discussing the titles. It seemed to help to focus them on what they needed to do.”

- 8. Give feedback on the quality of the teaching overall.** Be very clear about the judgement you make and what will happen next. This will depend on your school's own processes and the reason why the teacher was observed.
- 9. Make the action points clear.** Creating action points will support the teacher themselves and give you (the observer) an agenda for your next observation. Ideally, the action points will have emerged during the course of the discussion and feedback. You are aiming for the teacher to 'own' these themselves.

TIP

Use developing the action points as a chance to revisit the key points from the lesson, like this:

“Let's reflect on what we said about structuring the lesson. We agreed that next time you would try to ...”

“We talked about ways of involving the children more. Tell me what strategies we agreed that you would try out tomorrow.”

“We discussed child X's behaviour and you said that it was fairly typical of him. Remind me what were the two things you thought would make the most difference? Let's agree those as action points for you to work on.”

- 10. Respond sensitively to negative reactions.** Teachers may get upset during feedback. Respond appropriately but stay calm yourself. Do not be tempted to change the judgement you made just because of the teacher's reaction. Distinguish between the lesson and the teacher by reminding the teacher that you are not evaluating them as a person; you are evaluating just one lesson, out of hundreds.





Click [here](#) to download the editable tool

Tool 3: Observing Lessons: A Policy Exemplar

Rationale

This policy sets out purposes of lesson observation, the range of contexts in which it will take place and the roles of those involved. As a result of this policy, everyone should understand what will happen and how the evidence gathered will be used to improve teaching and learning.

Principles

At our school:

- we believe that lesson observation contributes to school improvement and professional development, and particularly to improving teaching and learning
- we focus lesson observation on the learning and experiences of the pupils
- we understand that lessons may be observed for different purposes by a range of observers
- we recognise that everyone has a constructive role to play, whether as observer or observed, and that lesson observation should take place in a spirit of co-operation.

Audience

This policy is written primarily for teachers and senior leaders/managers. Aspects of it also apply to governors and to support staff, particularly teaching assistants (TAs).

Purposes and contexts

Lesson observations take place for a range of purposes: formal, developmental and informal. There will sometimes be overlap between these categories.

Formal purposes include observations:

- as part of the annual performance review cycle*
- as part of formal capability procedures.

Developmental purposes include observations:

- as part of professional development (by line managers, peers, and also by visiting teachers from other schools)
- to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, either of individuals or more broadly across the school (e.g. as part of Lesson Study or to embed a new initiative)
- by governors to improve their knowledge of classroom practice.

Informal purposes include short observations:

- by the headteacher and his/her deputy/deputies during the normal course of visits to classrooms and around the school
- by governors during their visits to improve their wider knowledge of the school.

Observations of lessons in line with this policy will take place on an appropriate and reasonable number of occasions, wherever possible agreed in advance between the observer and the teacher. These occasions should take account of both:

- the individual circumstances of the teacher
- the needs of the school overall.

The exceptions are:

- informal visits to classrooms by the headteacher and his/her deputies
- visits by governors.

Observations will vary in length, depending on their purpose(s), but the duration will be agreed in advance.

* Formal observations for the purposes of performance management (appraisal) will be in line with the specific arrangements set out in the policy agreed between senior managers, staff and the professional associations. That policy states that formal classroom observation will be carried out only by qualified teachers; they will normally be members of the leadership team. (See also below.)

Before any observation, the teacher being observed must be clear about:

- the date, time and length of the observation
- its purpose
- who will conduct it
- what feedback will be provided and by what date and time (see below).

Roles

Observations will usually be undertaken by senior leaders, middle managers (subject leaders, key stage leaders) and also by year-group leaders.

The exception will be observations undertaken as part of coaching and professional development, including Lesson Study; these observations may include observations by a teacher's peers.

Governors will not provide feedback on lessons unless:

- (a) they have qualified teacher status (QTS) *and*
- (b) it has been agreed with the teacher before the lesson begins that feedback will be provided.

Ofsted does not expect governors to observe lessons.¹²

Feedback and evidence

What happens to notes and other documents should be clearly restated before the lesson is observed, in line with this policy.

- Oral feedback and discussion must always be provided before the teacher leaves for the day, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness of one or other of the participants). Senior managers are responsible for ensuring time and space are made available for discussion for both participants.
- Formal written feedback, summarising the key judgements on the lesson seen and identifying the agreed development points, must be provided within two working days, and always before the start of any holiday.
- The teacher who has been observed should be invited to make written comments on the formal written feedback and must sign the feedback to acknowledge that they have received it.

All notes and other documentation related to the observation must be shown to the teacher who has been observed, if they ask to see them. They also have the right to be provided with copies and to keep them. The documents are confidential and should be stored in line with the school's security policy.

Informal observations will not be followed by formal feedback and no written record of what was observed will be kept. However, participants in Lesson Study may keep notes to inform their later discussions and should be prepared to show these to the observed teacher if requested.

Teachers who have additional responsibilities outside the classroom will also be observed undertaking those responsibilities: observations of that work is not covered by this policy.

Related policies:

This policy should be read alongside other school policies and, in particular, those on:

- teaching, learning and assessment
- continuing professional development – teachers
- continuing professional development – support staff
- performance management
- formal capability procedures.

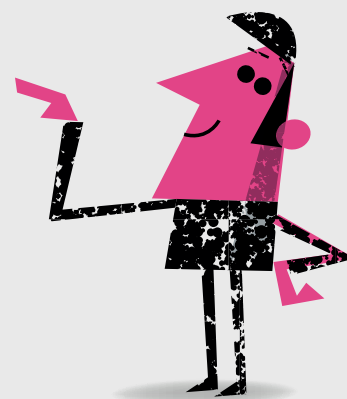
Agreed by:

This policy has been discussed with and agreed by staff on [date].

The policy has been agreed and adopted by the governing body on [date].

Review date:

This policy will be reviewed in two years' time, by [insert date], unless an earlier review or revision is needed.





Click [here](#) to download
the editable tool

Tool 4: Lesson Observation Form

Observer:	Teacher:	Year(s)/Class:	Pupils present:		No. with SEN statement:
			B	G	
Date:	Observation time: From: To:		Length of observation (in minutes):		
<p>Purpose of observation:</p> <p>Key focus of observation <i>if any:</i></p>					
<p>Context <i>including key objectives; any work done previously; support staff; trainees; volunteers</i></p>					
<p>Teaching <i>including the impact on learning of: planning, subject knowledge, assessment, differentiation: management of time and resources:</i></p>					
<p>Achievement:</p>					

Attitudes, behaviour and safety:

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Strengths:

→

Areas for development:

→

Grade on scale 1-4: 1=outstanding, 2=good, 3=requires improvement, 4=inadequate
Ofsted does not expect schools to use its evaluation schedule to grade teaching or individual lessons.¹³

Summary grade:

Agreed targets: *These should relate to the development areas listed above.*

→

SIGNATURE OF TEACHER OBSERVED:

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER:

TEACHER'S COMMENTS *if any:*



Click [here](#) to download the editable tool

Tool 5: Lesson Observation Exemplar

Observer: <i>Kati Singh</i>	Teacher: <i>John Harvey</i>	Year(s)/Class: <i>Year 1-JH</i>	Pupils present:		No. with SEN statement:
			B <i>14</i>	G <i>16</i>	<i>1 boy (LB)</i>
Date: <i>Monday 19 September 2016</i>	Observation time: From: <i>9.30</i> To: <i>9.55</i>	Length of observation (in minutes): <i>25 mins.</i>			

Purpose of observation: *SMT monitoring of phonics teaching following Year 1 phonics screening check results*

Key focus of observation if any: *Consolidation of previous learning (esp. GPCs) and pace of new learning*

Context including key objectives; any work done previously; support staff; trainees; volunteers:

*Introduction of 'air' trigraph plus tricky words: all, call, some
TA for Luke; ITE trainee (one-week observation).*

Teaching including the impact on learning of: planning, subject knowledge, assessment, differentiation, management of time and resources:

Good use of programme to complete planning but this work should have been covered by end of YR. (See target below.) Good to reinforce previous GPCs with flashcards, but chn. really should know all these GPCs from YR and you can afford to spend less time on this consolidation: speed up with the cards. Good correction of AZ's articulation - accurate model for her. Effective mnemonics to support reading and spelling of 'air' ("chair in the air"; "chair on the stair"). Chn. coming to front to write '-air' words on w/board slows things significantly: others then get restless and do not have a chance to write words themselves. Missed opportunity for assessment, too. Overall pace of teaching is too slow for amount of learning needed. Good structure to session overall - key now is to improve pace of teaching - both within the lesson and overtime - and give enough time for children to read and spell on their own. A lot of missed potential!

Achievement:

Chn. have good knowledge of GPCs already learned and also tricky words when practising/revising these (e.g. your, said, how). However, they do not have enough opportunity to read and spell words with the 'air' trigraph, partly because the pace is too slow earlier in the lesson. By end of lesson, they have really not grasped this new learning, except for RS and KL who quickly point out words they already know to one another (stair, pair, hairy).

Attitudes, behaviour and safety:

Almost all chn. concentrate and participate well, inc. LB (in part because of v. good TA support). Almost all work co-operatively, too, and benefit from paired work – checking the number of phonemes they can hear in a word.

New EAL pupil (AZ) totally engaged and enjoying routines. Excellent work with her partner (good choice of partner!).

However, three boys (near door) not fully engaged: they cannot see w/board properly from where they are sitting. Their responses are minimal by end of session – essentially, off task.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Strengths:	Areas for development:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → range of activities is good because they all engage children well: consolidation via flashcards; blending and segmenting → good use of mnemonics → accurate articulation of phonemes provides a very good model for children and supports their blending → excellent deployment of TA (well briefed) to support LB – who makes progress at least in line with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → pace of teaching is too slow – coverage of content needs improvement if chn. are to learn all they need by end of Y1 → chn. need more time for practising reading and spelling to consolidate new learning – also would offer you more opportunity to assess that new learning for individuals → make sure that <u>all</u> children can see: take time to move them if they can't.

Grade on scale 1–4: 1=outstanding, 2=good, 3=requires improvement, 4=inadequate

Summary grade:

3

Agreed targets: These should relate to the development areas listed above.


- Discuss end of YR expectations with YR teachers before 12 October – and this class in particular. KS to set up and attend meeting; JH to lead.
- Provide more opportunity in each session for chn. to read with a partner and to spell words on their own, both to consolidate new learning and to provide opportunities for close assessment = focus for future observation.

SIGNATURE OF TEACHER OBSERVED:

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER:

TEACHER'S COMMENTS if any:

This feedback is really helpful – particularly to have it early this term. I was disappointed with the screening check results in June. I worried that if the pace was faster, the children would get left behind, but I can see from this that these children had grasped previous GPCs and tricky words – more so than I thought – and I could push them on more quickly.

 [Click here](#) to download the editable tool

Tool 6: Oldway Primary School's Lesson Observation Form

Teacher:

Date:

Observer:

Class:

Focus:



Criteria	Comments
<p>1. The teacher plans effectively and sets clear objectives that are understood.</p> <p>a) _____</p> <p>b) _____</p> <p>c) _____</p> <p>d) _____</p> <p>e) _____</p>	
<p>2. The teacher shows good subject knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>a) _____</p> <p>b) _____</p> <p>c) _____</p> <p>d) _____</p> <p>e) _____</p>	
<p>3. Teaching methods used enable all pupils to learn effectively.</p> <p>a) _____</p> <p>b) _____</p> <p>c) _____</p> <p>d) _____</p> <p>e) _____</p>	
<p>4. Pupils are well managed; high standards of behaviour insisted upon.</p> <p>a) _____</p> <p>b) _____</p> <p>c) _____</p> <p>d) _____</p> <p>e) _____</p>	
<p>5. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly.</p> <p>a) _____</p> <p>b) _____</p> <p>c) _____</p> <p>d) _____</p> <p>e) _____</p>	

6. Pupils achieve productive outcomes.

- a) _____.
- b) _____.
- c) _____.
- d) _____.
- e) _____.

7. The teacher makes effective use of time and resources.

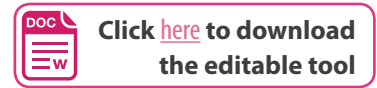
- a) _____.
- b) _____.
- c) _____.
- d) _____.
- e) _____.

Other comments:

Signed: [Observer]

Teacher:

Date:



Tool 7: Oldway Primary School's Lesson Observation Exemplar

Teacher: KS1

Observer: DH

Class: A

Focus: Guided Writing – Non-fiction



Criteria	Comments
<p>1. The teacher plans effectively and sets clear objectives that are understood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Objectives are communicated clearly at the start of lesson. b) Materials are ready. c) There is a good structure to the lesson. d) The lesson is reviewed at the end. e) The learning needs of those with IEPs are incorporated with the teacher's planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pupils sat appropriately on carpet and ready to learn. LB included with Braille support. ✓ Lesson structure was very clear with good cross-curricular links. ✓ Shared reading of text was used very skilfully to develop reading skills inc. expression and vocabulary. ✓ Excellent open questions used effectively to probe and extend learning – this is a real strength!
<p>2. The teacher shows good subject knowledge and understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Teacher has a thorough knowledge of the subject content covered in the lesson. b) Subject material was appropriate for the lesson. c) Knowledge is made relevant and interesting for pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ You gave clear guidance and explanations throughout. ✓ Excellent links made to phonics. ✓ Excellent praise and positive reinforcement/behaviour management throughout.
<p>3. Teaching methods used enable all pupils to learn effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Objectives are communicated clearly at the start of lesson. b) Materials are ready. c) There is a good structure to the lesson. d) The lesson is reviewed at the end. e) The learning needs of those with IEPs are incorporated within the teacher's planning. f) High standards of effort, accuracy and presentation are encouraged. g) Appropriate methods of differentiation are used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pupils were engaged and very keen to contribute. You have high expectations from all and strive to support and improve pupils' answers. ✓ Very good subject knowledge evident. ✓ Exceptionally clear instructions re task – you modelled use of dictionary/word bank/life cycles. ✓ Very smooth transition to tables.
<p>4. Pupils are well managed; high standards of behaviour insisted upon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Pupils are praised regularly for their good effort and achievement. b) Prompt action is taken to address poor behaviour. c) Pupils' written work is assessed regularly and accurately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Excellent assessment for learning – you consistently check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions. ✓ Excellent guided writing – all pupils encouraged to participate as you modelled construction/editing of a sentence.
<p>5. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Pupils' understanding is assessed throughout the lesson by the use of the teacher's questions. b) Mistakes and misconceptions are recognised by the teacher and used constructively to facilitate learning. c) All pupils are treated fairly, with an equal emphasis on the work of boys and girls, and all ability groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Precise vocabulary was encouraged. ✓ TA was used effectively during the lesson to support and reinforce and/or re-pace your teaching. ✓ Exemplary inclusive practice observed re visually impaired child. ✓ Very good structure to lesson with an excellent plenary involving peer assessment.

Criteria	Comments
<p>6. Pupils achieve productive outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Pupils remain fully engaged throughout and make progress in lesson.</i> b) <i>Pupils understand what work is expected of them during the lesson.</i> c) <i>The pupil outcomes of the lesson are consistent with the objectives set at the beginning.</i> d) <i>The teacher and pupils work at a good pace.</i> 	
<p>7. The teacher makes effective use of time and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Time is well utilised and learning is maintained for all available time.</i> b) <i>A good pace is maintained throughout the lesson.</i> c) <i>Good use is made of any support available, e.g. TA/adult volunteer.</i> d) <i>Appropriate learning resources are used.</i> 	
<p>Other comments:</p> <p><i>Well done! This was an outstanding shared reading and guided writing session! Your focused teaching, clear explanations and very high expectations enabled the children to understand fully about the life cycle of a butterfly. Impressive writing outcomes were evidence of this. Very skilful questioning consistently encouraged high-quality answers and excellent use of AFL throughout shaped the lesson, enabling you to differentiate as appropriate.</i></p>	

Signed: [Observer]

Teacher:

Date:



Click [here](#) to download the editable tool

Tool 8: Oldway Primary School's Individual Training Plan



REVIEWEE: _____ **ROLE:** _____ **REVIEWER:** _____

PM OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA & EVIDENCE	SUPPORT/TRAINING	TIMESCALE incl. class obs & evidence	COST
A. <i>School Improvement Objective[s]</i>	1.			
	2.			
B. <i>Individual Objective[s]</i>	1.			
	Other identified training/training requests			

REVIEWEE: _____ **REVIEWER:** _____ **HEADTEACHER:** _____

Date : _____ **Progress check:** _____ **Review date:** _____

Further reading

[A Guide to Effective Collaboration](#)

[A Guide to Effective CPD](#)

[Teaching Assistants: A Guide to Good Practice](#)

Useful link for schools in Wales

Estyn (2014). *Effective classroom observation in primary and secondary schools*

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/effective-classroom-observation-primary-and-secondary-schools-october-2014>

Useful link for schools in Scotland

Education Scotland's website collects examples of highly effective practice, including self-evaluation and lesson observation.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/examplesofpractice/index.asp>

Useful link for schools in Northern Ireland

Education and Training Inspectorate (2012). *The Reflective Teacher*

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/reflective-teacher>

Endnotes

1 Welsh Government (2013). *Classroom observation – purpose and protocols*.

2 Barber, M. and Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*. McKinsey and Company.

3 Walter, C. and Briggs, J. (2012). *What professional development makes the most difference to teachers? – A report sponsored by Oxford University Press*. Oxford: OUP.

4 Oldway Primary School: inspection reports, 4 June 2009 and 18 July 2013.

5 Ofsted (2009). *Twenty outstanding primary schools – excelling against the odds* (090170). Manchester: Ofsted. www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090170.

6–13 Ofsted (2016). *School inspection handbook: Handbook for inspecting schools in England under section 5 of the Education Act 2005* (150066). Manchester: Ofsted. © Crown Copyright 2014. <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/why-do-ofsted-inspectors-observe-individual-lessons-and-how-do-they-evaluate-teaching-schools>

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