



**The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust
Classroom Observation Protocol
(Teaching staff only)
November 2014**

Final

Approved September 2014



Introduction

The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust believes that the quality of teaching is fundamental to effective learning and that the quality of pupil outcomes is our main priority. It also believes that teaching and learning should be a shared experience for all staff involved in teaching, and children's learning. An 'open door' policy is therefore encouraged across TEFAT academies.

TEFAT also believes the quality of teaching and learning is not determined solely by the formal observation of teachers in the classroom but by a range of evidence and information. Formal classroom observation will therefore be no more than is absolutely required for the purpose.

Observations for Professional and Joint Practice Development

TEFAT has 'for teachers' as one of its four core values. This means a wholehearted commitment to colleagues' professional development. Many forms of additional staff development are best undertaken by means of observations and feedback. These may be self-reviews using a video, or peer reviews - planning and working with a colleague. As soon as others are involved this is a high-trust relationship and so should be arranged directly between the staff concerned with an agreed focus and format for feedback (discussion, notes etc). It is entirely appropriate for subject, key stage or senior leaders to support colleagues by conducting observations and providing feedback. Discussion of practice and planning for improvement is a core aspect of professionalism. In outstanding schools and academies such an approach is quite normal.

Equally it is entirely appropriate for senior staff to arrange learning walks (by arrangement with the teacher) or drop in visits to classes. The academy may have a cycle of learning walks looking at particular aspects of the environment e.g. 'working walls', 'role play areas', or to gain a snapshot of children actually learning e.g. the '3 in 3' (3 questions in 3 minutes to each class). These can provide useful evidence of the overall quality of provision, will generally lead to children and staff being proud to share what they're doing and might lead to some pointers for improvement across the academy. Such visits are, however, not a part of the appraisal process.

If longer additional observations are needed (e.g. the academy has a focus on improving maths provision so has planned a series of observations on this), these should be agreed in advance. Depending on the particular circumstances, it may not be practicable to provide staff with specific advance notice of monitoring activities that are carried out for purposes other than appraisal. The number and duration of



lesson observations and other development activities will be for the Principal to determine as appropriate.

For Self-Evaluation

A Principal has a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure proper standards of provision and professional performance are established and maintained throughout the school.

In order that classroom observation related to appraisal is kept to a minimum, information gathered during the appraisal process may be used, as appropriate, for a variety of purposes including informing school self-evaluation and school improvement strategies. The Principal may determine that it is necessary to collect such evidence as their professional judgement dictates and this may include additional lesson observations. Any such observations will not form part of the appraisal cycle but are to inform the overall judgement of provision in the academy. Teachers will be informed in advance of the nature and timing of any such observations.

For appraisal purposes

TEFAT is committed to ensuring that classroom observation is developmental and supportive and that those involved in the process will:

- carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
- evaluate objectively;
- report accurately and fairly; and
- respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

Classroom observations for the purpose of appraisal will be restricted to that required to make a judgement and will not normally be more than three observations in any one cycle. However, this may vary according to specific circumstances. Those being observed will be given 5 working days' notice. If either party requests there will be an opportunity for the reviewer and teacher to meet within directed time in order that the content of the lesson to be observed can be discussed.

The arrangements for classroom observation will be included in the appraisal planning statement and will include; the amount of observation; specify its primary purpose; any particular aspects of the employee's performance which will be



assessed; the duration of the observation; when during the appraisal cycle the observation is likely to take place; and who is likely to conduct the observation.

Where evidence emerges about the appraisee's performance which gives rise to concern during the cycle, additional observations may be arranged in addition to those recorded at the beginning of the cycle.

In keeping with the commitment to supportive and developmental classroom and task observation, those being observed will be notified in advance.

Classroom observations of teachers will only be undertaken by persons with QTS, who have had adequate preparation and the appropriate professional skills to undertake observation and to provide constructive oral and written feedback and support. Oral feedback will be given as soon as practicable after any observation and no later than the end of the following working day. It will be given in a suitable, private environment. Neither pupils nor governors will undertake observations for the purpose of appraisal. Feedback will be given during directed time, not PPA time.

Written feedback will be provided within five working days of the observation taking place. If issues emerged from an observation that were not part of the focus of the observation as recorded in the planning and review statement these should also be covered in the written feedback and the appropriate action taken.

The written record of feedback also includes the date on which the observation took place, the lesson/task observed and the length of the observation. The appraisee has the right to append written comments on the feedback document.

For formal procedures

TEFAT's expectation is for all teaching to be at least good. For teachers on a formal capability procedure an important part of the support offered to the teacher will be a clearly defined amount of classroom observation with structured oral and written feedback. The purpose of this support is to coach and train the staff member so that s/he can plan and deliver good lessons independently and without support. The amount of classroom observation will be discussed with the teacher and their union representative who is supporting and advising them in the formal process.