

Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Classroom Observation Protocol

Document Control

Date	Revision amendment details	By whom
2012-2018	Revisions various	Trustees
Dec 2018	Review and approval by Ops group	Ops Group
Dec 2018	Adopted by TEFAT Board Trust	Trustees
Dec 2020	Proposed date for review subject to statutory update as required. Appendix annually.	Ruth Dickens

1. Introduction

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. 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. It is expected that each teacher will be involved in a lesson observation three times per academic year (up to 3 hours duration in total), except for circumstances in which concerns about an individual's performance are being addressed through either the Appraisal Policy or Capability Policy.

2. Learning walks and drop in sessions for professional and joint practice development

- 2.1 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 voluntary self-reviews, for example using a video, or peer reviews incorporating 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.
- 2.2 Equally it is entirely appropriate for senior staff to arrange learning walks (by arrangement with the teacher) or drop in visits to classes by the Principal or designated named staff. 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 provide some insight for improvement across the academy. Such visits are, however, not a part of the appraisal process.

3. Use of observations for academy self-evaluation

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.

4. For appraisal purposes

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. Classroom observations for the purpose of appraisal will be restricted to that required to make a judgement. It is expected that each teacher will be involved in a lesson observation three times per academic year (up to 3 hours duration in total) for the purposes of appraisal.
- 4.3. Those being observed will be given 5 working days' notice although observations should be agreed at the beginning of the cycle. 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. Oral feedback will be given as soon as practicable after any observation and no later than the end of the following working day.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. 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. Any additional observations will cease once the performance concerns have been addressed satisfactorily.
- 4.6. In keeping with the commitment to supportive and developmental classroom and task observation, those being observed will be notified at least 5 working day in advance.

- 4.7. Classroom observations of teachers will only be undertaken by persons with QTS, who have had adequate preparation and the appropriate professional skills and experience to undertake observation and to provide constructive oral and written feedback and support. It will be given in a suitable, private environment. Feedback will be given during directed time, not PPA time.
- 4.8. 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.
- 4.9. The written record of feedback should also include 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.

5. Observations during the formal capability process

- 5.1. TEFAT expects teachers to deliver high quality teaching which is focussed on improving outcomes for students. For teachers whose performance is being managed under 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 they can plan and deliver high quality 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.