



## ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE LESSON VISITS POLICY 2023-25

### Introduction

1. This policy is intended to assist all staff included in classroom observation as part of monitoring, training or College review process. The policy acknowledges the right of the Principal and others to observe a teacher at work, “as part of the Principal’s responsibilities for evaluating the standards of teaching & learning in the College and ensuring that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained”. \*However, this will be undertaken in a professional, supportive and non-intimidatory way that serves the needs of the College and of the teachers. Classroom observation may be an informal part of the day-to-day running of the College or may be carried out within a formal framework for a specific purpose. Classroom observation comprises only one part of a College or teacher review. OFSTED emphasises the need for its inspectors to:
  - Carry out work with professionalism, integrity and courtesy.
  - Evaluate objectively.
  - Report honestly and fairly.
  - Communicate accurately.
  - Act in the best interest of the pupils, and
  - Respect the confidentiality of information gained.

The Governors believe that these principles should underpin all classroom observation, whatever its purpose.

### Purpose

2. Classroom observation is carried out by Senior College staff, by colleagues or by outside agencies for a number of reasons. These may be:
  - As an informal classroom visit within the normal College day.
  - As part of an inspection by OFSTED or SIP.
  - By the LA in agreement with the College as part of a monitoring programme, either generally or at the specific College.
  - As part of an agreed programme of monitoring and support to a team or department to improve the quality of teaching, or in some instances as support to an individual teacher.
  - As part of a capability procedure as one means of gathering evidence, or as support for improvement strategies.
  - As part of ongoing training and development for students on teaching practice or for ECTs, other trainee teachers or teaching assistants.
  - By colleagues as part of CPD (Continuing Professional Development), departmental development or teambuilding.
  - To allow teachers to be able to make valid judgements and therefore inform Departmental SEF’s requiring judgements on the standard of learning and teaching.

- As part of SLT Review process to gather information on standards of Teaching and Learning in College.
- By Head of Department / Faculty as part of their monitoring process.
- As a part of the Performance management process

The main purpose of lesson observation should always be to raise the quality of pupils' learning experience and it is against this backdrop that it should be viewed.

### **\* Teacher Pay and Conditions Document**

Observation is to allow the nominated observer to identify elements of good practice and development needs within the context of the teaching and learning that is under review.

Observation may also be undertaken as learning or training experience for the observer, for example when a trainee teacher, School Direct, Teach First or ECT observes an experienced colleague or when colleagues observe each other to share good practice.

### **Process and Practice**

3. The detailed procedures of classroom observation will relate to the specific purpose of the observation being carried out. However, the Governors would wish to see the following:
  - Discussions with staff in advance, to indicate the purpose of the observation, the procedure to be followed and who will carry it out.
  - Teachers will normally be informed 5 days before any observation is to be carried out. There will be occasions however, where teachers are observed with little, or no notice. This could be with OFSTED or as part of SLT Review for example. No notice in the sense of an SLT review means only that staff will not know which lesson will be observed.
  - The observer should understand the context, aim and intended outcomes of the lesson and agree a focus or focuses of the observation with the teacher. These might include progress and achievement of pupils, challenge or assessment etc. To this effect, the teacher being observed for performance management purposes should produce a full lesson plan, with class data, using the official College format and this should be given to the observer at the start of the observation. Observation for other purposes should provide a seating plan with class data and a standard plan used by the member of staff. The observer also needs access to pupils' work during the lesson in order to assess progress, the level of work and quality of feedback.
  - Usually in the summer term, triad lesson observations take place comprising a member of SLT, Middle Leader and member of staff. These are for training purposes and no record is kept of any judgements made. For these, the completion by staff of a formal lesson plan is optional.
  - Observer and teacher should be aware of the criteria to be used in the observation, how the observation will be recorded and what will happen to these records subsequently. The college lesson observation form uses the criteria identified by Ofsted and is freely available to all staff and governors.
  - The observer should record only information which is relevant and relates to the agreed criteria.

- There should be a clear understanding before the lesson whether the observer will remain formally detached or will participate in the lesson.

### **Feedback**

4. The benefit of classroom observation is greatest when appropriate feedback is given to the teacher. This should:
  - Be given as soon as possible after the observation and within 24 hours
  - Be part of a two-way discussion
  - Be based on factual information collected relevant to the agreed criteria
  - Take place in an appropriate setting during the normal working day, and
  - Include the teacher being given a copy of feedback report
  - A copy of the feedback is stored with the Principal/Vice Principal so that evaluation of the process and recommendations of the process can be made.

Feedback may lead to the discussion of possible follow-up work and/or future lesson observation.

### **Summary**

5. Classroom observation is one of a range of strategies which can enhance the important dialogue between teachers, and between teachers and those who manage them, on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning thereby raise the standards of teaching at St Michael's.

Classroom observation is there to support the teacher. It should not, however, be used as a weapon, or over-used so that it becomes burdensome to the teacher, e.g. it would be unreasonable for a teacher to be observed by several different parties on the same day.

**July 2023**

**Signed: .....**



**Date: ...26<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Chair of the Curriculum Committee**

**Review Date: 2025**