

Educational Services

Monitoring and Evaluating Teaching and Learning Including Classroom Observations

(JNCT 2.6)



Version Control

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1. BACKGROUND

South Ayrshire Council – Educational Services aims to:

- Promote Effective Teaching and Learning
- Secure Best Value Consistent with High Quality Educational Provision

“Teachers have a responsibility to work co-operatively with colleagues and others to pursue the overall objectives of the service”

“Teachers have a right and responsibility to continue to contribute to the development of a quality service”

(A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century – Agreement reached following the McCrone Report)

“There is an expectation that teachers share in even more open ways than in the past information on a number of issues relating to the school. This includes information on classroom practice and, with appropriate individuals and agencies, information about the work of their pupils and their school. In order to achieve this it is essential that the work undertaken by teachers in their classes becomes the subject of professional debate and dialogue based on a range of evidence”

(Teacher Professionalism and the Scottish Parliament, EIS, 2000)

It is clear that a wide range of factors – Scottish Executive policies, local authority policies, the McCrone agreement, advice from professional associations, advice from HMIE and school development planning – have led to a widespread agreement that our schools should follow self-evaluative policies. In addition, while recognising the professional autonomy and authority of teachers, the individual teacher has an opportunity and an obligation to review his/her own work and the structures within which it is set. Under the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000), there is also an obligation on all involved in education to seek to secure continuous improvement.

2. PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

- a) Schools should follow self-evaluative procedures involving the use of “ How Good is our School?”(4th Edition) and How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare.

Such procedures attempt to answer three basic questions:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

- b) Self – evaluation activities should be carried out in an atmosphere of collegiality and trust in which it is understood by all teachers involved that the whole process is directed to improving educational attainment through learning and teaching.

- c) Monitoring and evaluation activities (apart from those in pupil contact time) will be carried out in management and / or collegiate time within the parameters of the 35-hour working week as outlined in the agreement, “A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century”.
- d) Monitoring and evaluation should be planned within the 3-year school development planning cycle. The timings of related activities should be included in the yearly planning cycle.
- e) Monitoring and evaluation activities may include:
- Reviewing schemes of work and / or termly plans
 - Discussion with colleagues, pupils and parents
 - Reviewing pupils’ written work and homework
 - Reviewing test and examination results
 - Considering health and safety issues
 - Considering resource issues
 - Considering equality issues
 - Classroom observation
 - The impact of agreed school policies
- f) Where there has been consultation and agreement via the planning process, that the quality indicator being evaluated requires monitoring within the classroom setting, the following advice is given:
- The focus of classroom observation visits is learning and teaching and therefore the policy should embrace all those staff engaged in the learning and teaching process, promoted as well as unpromoted staff.
 - Classroom observation visits should be preceded by discussion, planning and shared understanding of – the personnel involved; purpose; activities; frequency; duration; timing.
 - Reasonable notice should be given of any visit taking place.
- There will be a maximum of 4 classroom observations in the school year for the purpose of routine monitoring and evaluating of classroom practise. This may include peer review visits. The exceptions to this would be newly qualified teachers who will receive observation in line with their profile requirements and any staff member who is being supported through the teacher competency framework.
 - Classroom observations as part of the routine monitoring and evaluating of classroom practise should last no longer than 30 mins. Where the observer feels it would be beneficial to return to see the lesson plenary, they should notify the class teacher prior to leaving the room to make them aware.
 - All personnel involved should understand the desired outcomes of the process.

- There should be constructive professional dialogue and debriefing session as soon as reasonably possible after the observation session and this should be strictly based on the previously agreed purpose of the visit.
- Any notes taken during the session should be freely available for the individual teacher to see and to comment upon.
- Any points for action identified in the process should inform the consultation process leading to the setting of agreed targets for next session's development plan and PRD process.
- Classroom visits should be clearly distinct from any school arrangements for professional review and development. There may, of course, be implications for CLPL as a result of the professional dialogue which takes place after a classroom visit.
- Classroom observation should not be related to potential disciplinary procedures. However, there may be occasions where a teacher experiencing difficulties or is deemed to be under performing is subject to a closer monitoring as part of an agreed support package.

- g) Teachers should have the opportunity to request access to a colleague's classroom in order to observe good practice in action. Such a request should only be granted with the prior agreement of the individual teacher concerned.

3. **Conclusion**

Classroom observation should be perceived as contributing to and supporting the self evaluation process. It should assist staff to be reflective practitioners and allow them to participate in and inform the educational process and raise standards in our schools. The guidelines contained in this agreement should be followed in the spirit of trust, cooperation and collegiality.

In the unlikely event that a dispute should arise, every effort should be made to resolve the matter through the consultative process. Failure to find a resolution should be dealt with through normal grievance or disciplinary procedures.