



Aberdeen City LNCT Agreement

Quality Improvement Visits in Schools

Classroom visits play a key role in sharing good practice in teaching and learning and assuring quality as part of school self-evaluation within the improvement planning process. These visits may be part of the school's own internal quality improvement process or take the form of a quality improvement visit by colleagues from out with the setting, e.g. learning walks by members of the central team and senior leaders from Trio schools

Quality improvement visits are part of every academic session and their content and frequency must be discussed and agreed with staff. They will be based on school self-evaluation, support requirements identified through standards and quality reporting and inspection readiness. These will then inform the hours required in the WTA for that session.

Sharing classroom practice is a two-way process at the heart of which is collegiality, and all visits should take place within a climate of trust and support. The overall context of classroom visits is to promote high quality teaching and learning, to improve outcomes for learners. All participants need to be clear regarding the purpose of any specific visit in which they are involved, and the focus of visits must be planned in advance.

Classroom visits should be carried out in a spirit of trust, cooperation and collegiality, being mindful that the process must be supportive and beneficial to all those taking part. They should not necessitate additional workload beyond the time set aside in the Working Time Agreement (WTA) for professional dialogue after the visit. Any visitor should be sensitive to the everyday working of a class and should, where appropriate, play an active part in the activities to ensure engagement with the learning being observed.

Participants should discuss any observations arising from the classroom visit with senior colleagues to identify what support may be provided, for example CLPL opportunities or additional support for learners.

Whilst it is important to note the key points from any observation, no formal paperwork should be completed during the visit. After the visit has taken place, there should be a follow-up meeting. The professional dialogue that takes place after the class visit is the most important part of the process. The dialogue should not be one-sided and should allow practitioners to be reflective about the experience. Professional discussions should be supportive and use evaluative language where appropriate.

Information from classroom visits will contribute to the overall evaluation of teaching and learning within the school and will inform the improvement planning process. The School Improvement Plan should be a collegiately agreed document to which all staff contribute. In turn, this will help to identify priorities for the working time agreement.

In addition to classroom visits, there are other strategies which can be used to evaluate teaching and learning e.g. reviewing forward plans, pupil's written work/homework/assessment information/national assessment results and discussion with colleagues, pupils, parents/carers. These approaches should be considered as part of the whole quality improvement process so that classroom visits do not become the main focus of the exercise.

Quality Improvement Visits involving the Local Authority

Members of the central quality improvement team, School Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and School leaders from other schools may visit a range of classes as part of the Quality Improvement Framework activity. This will usually be undertaken in pairs to ensure there is opportunity for moderation and consistency of expectations across the team. This process provides schools with validation of self-evaluation, supporting improvement across the system. This is also a valuable form of professional development and ensures an opportunity for moderation. General key points from visits will be collated and shared at whole school level.

Probationer Support

As part of the probationer cycle of observations, the probationer manager will work alongside the probationers and probationer mentors to agree a suitable time for classroom visits to take place. Both the mentor and probationer manager will visit the classroom together, allowing an opportunity to develop a clear and consistent understanding of expectations. Individual written feedback will be shared following this visit as part of the probationer support programme.

Responding to concerns

Should any dispute about the process arise, every effort should be made to resolve the matter at school level, underlining the need for a collegiate ethos. In the event of a failure to find a resolution, it should be raised with Trade Union Secretaries who will discuss it with the appropriate QIM with a view to resolving the dispute. Any classroom visit processes under dispute with individuals must be suspended pending these procedures taking place and resolution of the dispute.