

1. AIMS

All teachers will participate in a scheme of peer observation on a termly basis: every teacher will observe once a term, and will be observed once a term.

All teachers, even those with considerable experience and expertise, can benefit from periodic feedback and reflection on their own teaching and also from their observation of others.

The aims of peer observations are to:

- ✓ improve and enhance learning.
- ✓ enhance the importance attached to the quality of teaching.
- ✓ exchange views and innovations.
- ✓ provide opportunities for teachers to learn about new or different teaching approaches, thus ensuring consistency of teaching standards across the school.
- ✓ increase teachers' awareness of the whole student experience.
- ✓ assist in providing a high quality educational experience for students.
- ✓ benefit all parties directly involved through a process of dialogue and sharing practice.
- ✓ exchange positive and constructive feedback.
- ✓ assist teachers with their professional development.
- ✓ help inform both personal and departmental development planning.
- ✓ identify examples of good practice that can be disseminated more widely throughout the school.
- ✓ assist teachers in preparing for Performance Management and external inspections.
- ✓ provide appropriate evidence to support quality assurance and enhancement requirements.

2. BENEFITS

A peer observation scheme can:

- ✓ place teaching in the public domain.
- ✓ be a supportive and constructive, practical, collegial activity.
- ✓ motivate and affirm all those involved.
- ✓ provide new ideas and skills.
- ✓ stimulate discussion about teaching and learning within teams.
- ✓ develop a sense of collegiality and an environment which values the sharing of experiences and ideas through teaching discourse.
- ✓ benefit the observer by providing insights and ideas.
- ✓ open up the private teaching space to others.
- ✓ support continual improvement.
- ✓ reassure highly self-critical teachers.
- ✓ provide feedback on innovative teaching methods.
- ✓ provide evidence of teaching teams as reflective communities.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Working groups: teachers will be working in pairs. Peer observation pairings will be changed every term.
- Process: peer observation is a developmental and formative rather than a judgmental process.
- Confidentiality: feed back will be confidential between the observing teacher and the observed teacher. Only the School Leadership Team will have a copy of the "Sharing

good practice - Peer Observation” in order to inform future professional development and training.

- Support: feedback will be structured, supportive and immediate.
- Discussion: the process will be sufficiently flexible to respect the pedagogical differences between subjects (e.g. settings, approaches). Discussion about what constitutes good teaching and what creates an effective learning environment should be debated and diversity should be valued.

4. PROCESS

a. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Prior to the lesson observation, a preliminary dialogue between the observing teacher and the observed teacher should normally take place, although it would be acceptable to do this by e-mail instead of face-to-face, if this is preferred. Teachers may wish to decide on a focus for the peer observation.

The observing teacher is responsible for contacting the teacher to be observed to set up the preliminary discussion. This discussion is essential to the success of the whole process. An important function of this discussion is to establish trust, deal with any anxieties felt by any of the parties, and give reassurance.

If the observing teacher is from the same department, and therefore familiar with the subject and students, then the length of the preliminary discussion can be brief.

The preliminary discussion should cover the following:

- *the time and place of the observation. It is the observed teacher's responsibility to nominate one lesson for observation. In practice there will be some negotiation between observing teacher and observed teacher to take account of availability; free lessons should be used to carry out observations. Cover will not be provided for peer observations.*
- *the specific learning objectives and outcomes for the lesson, the lesson content (teaching approach to be adopted, anticipated student activities, approximate timings for activities), the context of the teaching (room, timetable, the status and history of the group, any particular constraints or opportunities), the lesson's context within the overall curriculum and the programme of study. During the preliminary discussion, the teacher to be observed should provide a lesson plan for the observing teacher.*
- the way in which the students will be informed of the observation.
- how the observation is to be conducted (time of arrival and leaving, any focus to the observation, where the observing teacher will sit, whether it is appropriate to wander around - in a practical session it may be useful for the observing teacher to talk to students).
- any particular aspects on which the observed teacher would particularly welcome feedback.
- any particular concerns that either the observing teacher or the observed teacher might have about undertaking the observation
- the time and place of the feedback session.

b. LESSON OBSERVATION

Prior to the lesson, the observed teacher will normally have announced to the group of students the presence of the observing teacher.

The observing teacher must arrive in good time before the lesson commences and will stay for the duration of the lesson. During the lesson the observing teacher will sit so that they can observe both teacher and students. The observing teacher should observe the session

unobtrusively but should sit in a position where the reactions of students can be observed. The observing teacher should receive and consider any materials issued to students but should not ask students for their opinion of the lesson and should not interject or intervene in the lesson. However, it is accepted that there will be some types of teaching activity where it is appropriate for the observing teacher to engage with the students to some extent. In these circumstances, which need to be agreed between observing teacher and observed teacher in the preliminary discussion, control of the session must remain with the observed teacher.

Effective learning and teaching strategies vary across disciplines, and although the information below addresses the question generically, observing teachers can use this information as a catalyst in developing their view of what good teaching is.

- ✓ Some of the properties of good teaching:
 - Ability to make material taught stimulating and interesting
 - Capacity to explain material plainly
 - Showing concern and respect for students
 - A focus on key concepts and students' misperceptions rather than covering the ground
 - A desire to learn from students & peers about the effects of teaching and open to improvements
 - Using valid assessment methods
- ✓ Students' perception of good teaching:
 - Teachers give helpful feedback on how students are doing
 - Staff make an effort to understand students' difficulties
 - Teachers are very good at explaining things to students
 - Teachers work hard to make their subjects interesting
 - Teachers really try to get the best out of students
 - Teachers show a real interest in what students have to say

c. "SHARING GOOD PRACTICE - PEER OBSERVATION" FORM

During the lesson observation or directly after the lesson, notes will be recorded on the "Sharing Good Practice - Peer Observation" form. The observer should make notes, taking account of the need for clarity of feedback.

The notes and feedback will be positive, and the proposed areas for observation include:

* Section 1

- learning objectives and outcomes
- lesson structure (starter, main, plenary)
- lesson content: brief description of tasks and activities

** Section 2

- start of lesson: class met at the door
orderly entry
starter to engage the students
- objectives: objectives on display
objectives referred to during the lesson
objectives used to assess the learning taking place
objectives referred to in plenary
- assessment: teacher using the objectives to assess the learning

- objectives met by pupils
- evaluation of lesson
- Assessment for Learning
- planning:
 - pedagogical technique
 - organisation
 - evidence of differentiation
 - provision for SEN + G&T + Scholars + EAL
 - prior attainment used to inform planning
 - variety of activities for different learning styles
- teaching
 - clarity of instructions and explanation
 - pace of lesson
 - interaction with students
 - use of ICT
 - use of a variety of resources
- learning environment: displays
 - examples of students' work on walls
 - subject specific room
 - seating plan
 - aspirational, current and personalised displays
- behaviour:
 - attitude, motivation and participation of students
 - school policy used
 - pupils on task
 - positive relationships
 - non-confrontational strategies employed
 - use of praise and sanctions
 - high expectations from teacher

***** Section 3**

- what aspects the observing teacher could include in his / her own teaching.

d. FEEDBACK SESSION

Directly after the lesson or as soon as is practicable thereafter, motivational and/or formative feedback should be provided through a meeting between the observing teacher and observed teacher.

The observed teacher should be given the original of the completed "Sharing good practice - Peer Observation" form. The observing teacher and observed teacher may wish to keep a copy in their professional development portfolio.

The exercise will be of most benefit if comments are frank and objective but constructive and not judgmental. The observing teacher will mention positive aspects he or she has noted.

The feedback session should be conducted as follows:

- Teachers should find a calm and private environment.
- The discussion should be conducted in a respectful and positive manner.
- The observing teacher should highlight what went well, using evidence from the notes made on the “Sharing Good Practice - Peer Observation” form to help to structure the discussion.

It is recommended that the exact details of the observation discussion remain confidential between the people involved, unless the observed teacher wishes to share the information.

The observed teacher might like to help the observing teacher (e.g. if new to the teaching profession) by prompting e.g. ‘Did you notice when I did.....?’

On completion of feedback both the observing teacher and observed teacher should sign the “Sharing good practice - Peer Observation” form to confirm that peer observation has been undertaken.

5. COLLATION OF PEER OBSERVATION FORMS

The observing teacher will give a copy of the “Sharing Good Practice - Peer Observation” form to the Head of Teaching and Learning.

“Sharing Good Practice - Peer Observation” forms will be collated by the Head of Teaching and Learning to:

- inform the School Management Team of significant learning and teaching strengths.
- identify good practice that could shape the design of future training courses organised by the school.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE	Teacher		Date	
	Subject		Group	
	Observer		Room	

Focus: _____

Section 1: Briefly summarise the lesson (i.e. content, context–no opinions). *

Section 2: Describe at least one aspect of the lesson that you would consider good practice (including work scrutiny). **

Section 3: What aspects of the lesson do you think you could use in your own teaching (including work scrutiny)? ***

Signed (observing teacher)		Signed (observed teacher)	
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ROEDEAN MOIRA HOUSE PEER OBSERVATION POLICY 2018-2019

Related policies and documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Employee Handbook
- Staff Handbook
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Health Safety Handbook
- Boarding Staff Handbook
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools, Regulatory Requirements
- Teachers' Standards
- Departmental Handbook
- Complaints Policy (Pupils)
- Complaints Policy (Parents)

POLICY REVIEWED BY SCHOOL: June 2018

POLICY REVIEWED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL:

NEXT REVIEW: