



Spencer Park Primary School Classroom Observation Policy (2020)

POLICY STATEMENT

At Spencer Park Primary School, we believe that *“teachers are more effective in improving student outcomes when they are active agents in analysing their own practice.”*

Hargreaves, Halasz and Pont, 2007

Classroom observation is a **teacher driven** process:

- develops teachers’ self-awareness about their own teaching practice and its **impact**
- can help determine professional **learning needs** at individual and school level
- supports **sharing** of ideas and **expertise** among teachers including modelling of good practice
- provides **opportunities** to discuss challenges and concerns with colleagues
- supports the development of a **common language** and **common understanding** of effective teaching practices that have impact
- builds a **collective whole-school accountability** for the quality of teaching and **improved student outcomes**

We believe teachers at Spencer Park Primary School should engage in regular classroom observation, including peer observation and/or video observation, with a view to answering two questions:

1. **Is what I am doing quality teacher practice?**
2. **How do I know?**

DEFINITIONS

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

A data collection strategy to add value to teacher practice. It is a useful strategy for teachers to collect the evidence they need:

- to reflect on how their teaching is impacting on student learning
- to set personal learning goals, monitor and reflect on their progress and to celebrate their learning

PEER OBSERVATION

Teachers observing each other’s practice and learning from one another. Peer observation is focused on teachers’ individual needs and the opportunity to both learn from others’ practice and offer constructive feedback to peers. Peer observation aims to support the sharing of practice and building awareness about the impact of own teaching in order to affect change.

VIDEO OBSERVATION

Video Observation is recorded practice which is later viewed in part or in full as a means of observation of self and/or others. Video observation is focused on supporting the professional growth of individual teachers and their identified needs. Video observation aims to support self-reflection and provide access to observation of others practice anytime, anywhere.

RECOMMENDED READING

[Teachers Need Real Feedback](#); Bill Gates, TED Talks Education

[Rethinking Classroom Observation](#); Mily Dolci Grimm, Trent Kaufman and Dave Doty

[Teachers Observing Teachers: A Professional Development Tool for Every School](#); Education World 2014

[Introducing Classroom Observation](#); AITSL

[Videos of Practice](#); AITSL

[Classroom Practice Continuum](#); AITSL

TEACHER RELEASE

Relief time is available to teachers to ensure Classroom Observation can take place. This time may be required for the observing teacher to conduct their observation and/or to release both the teacher to be observed and the observing teacher to meet prior to and following the classroom observation.

This can be accessed by discussing with any member of the Administration Team.

STAGES OF A CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROCESS

There are three stages to Classroom Observation at Spencer Park Primary School.

1. Pre-Observation Discussion
2. Observation
3. Post-Observation Discussion

PRE-OBSERVATION DISCUSSION

Prior to the Pre-Observation Discussion, the teacher to be observed *may* wish to complete the Self Reflection Template, provided at Appendix 1.

A time is organised and agreed to by both the teacher to be observed and the observer.

Agreement is reached in this meeting about:

- The time and length of the observation session
- The focus of the observation and its connection to:
 - The teacher's own learning goal, or
 - A learning issue for a particular student or group of students, or
 - A school priority, or
 - Phase of learning priority, or
 - Area identified as part of Performance Management
- The types of evidence of observable behaviour to be collected, and how
- When the evidence will be given back to the observed teacher
- Agree on post-observation discussion format
- When the post-observation discussion will occur

The teacher to be observed

- Briefly articulates the context of the lesson or part of lesson to be observed
- Describes the observable behaviours s/he is expecting and
- Some description of expected student engagement

Together, the teacher to be observed and the observer complete the Pre-Observation Conversation Template, provided at Appendix 2.

OBSERVATION

The observer observes the lesson or part of lesson to be observed. This may take place *live*, in the classroom, or at another time, when watching a recorded lesson.

The observer makes notes of what is seen and heard in relation to the focus of the observation and the agreed types of evidence. No observations outside of this scope should be made. The observer should refrain from making judgements at all times.

The observer completes the Observation Template, provided at Appendix 3. **The completed Observation Template and any other evidence collected is given to the teacher who was observed.**

POST-OBSERVATION DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Post-Observation Discussion is to facilitate reflection and goal setting by the teacher who was observed.

A time is organised and agreed to by both the teacher who was observed and the observer.

Prior to this time, the teacher who was observed should take time to reflect on the evidence provided after the observation and to prepare for the post-observation discussion.

At the agreed time, the Post-Observation Discussion takes place. The conversation must follow the format agreed upon at the Pre-Observation Discussion.

An example of the discussion prompting that might take place by the observer includes:

- You mentioned you wanted to focus on questioning. Reflecting on your questioning during that lesson, how do you think it went?
- What is the data telling you?
- What are three things you did well?
- What would you do differently?
- What was the effect of your questioning on your students?

The Post-Observation Template, provided at Appendix 4, is completed by the teacher who was observed.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS

- The teacher to be observed is the best person to decide who will be the observer.
- The teacher to be observed determines the focus of the observation, taking into consideration student outcomes and behaviour, performance management goals and school/Department priorities.
- The teacher to be observed is the owner of all information gathered as part of the classroom observation process. This includes observation templates and videos of practice.
- All concerns regarding:
 - The when, duration, frequency and number of observations
 - Methods of data collections
 - Location of observer within the classroom
 - The when and structure of post-observation discussion
 - What next?are addressed through *Stages of a Classroom Observation*.

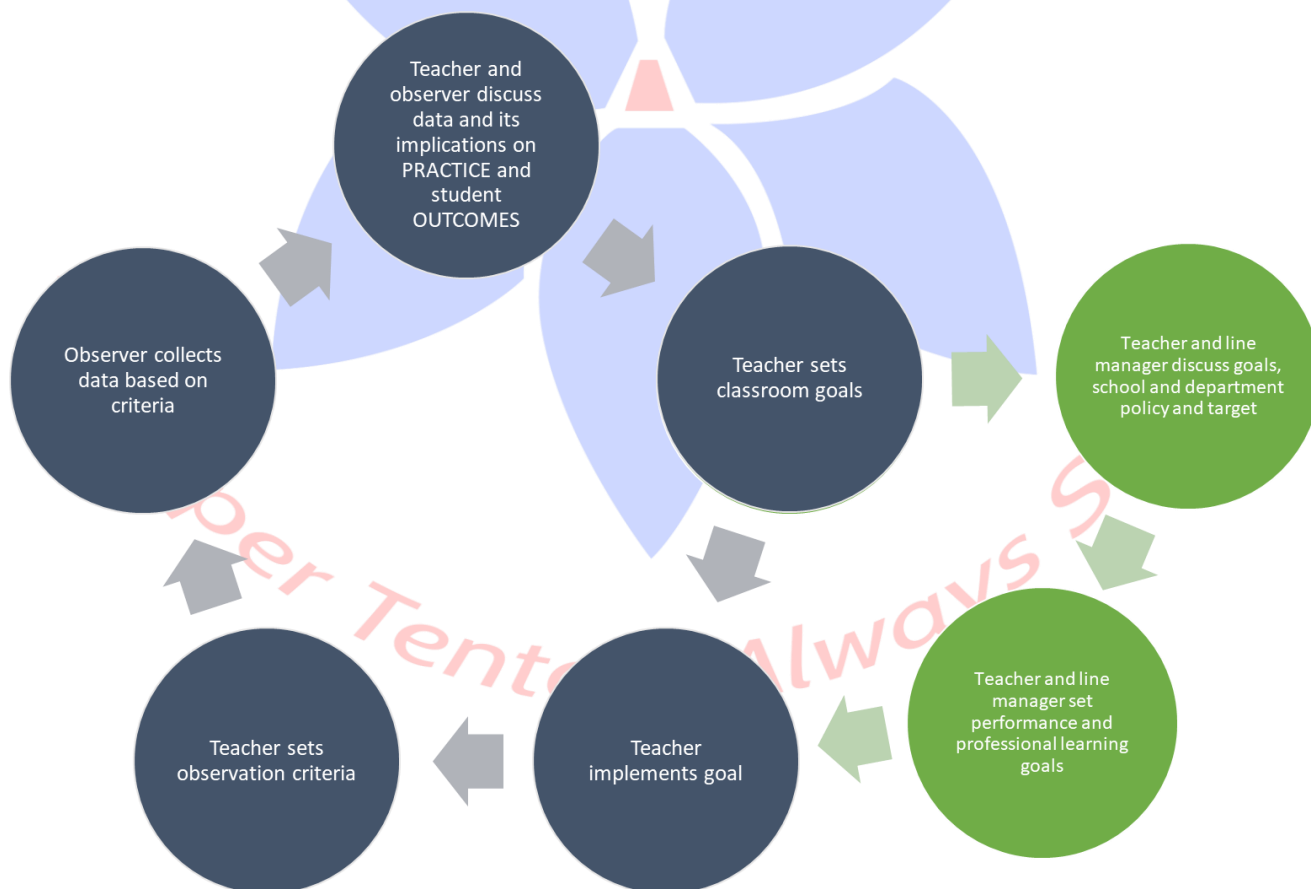
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Classroom observation is *one strategy* for collecting evidence about teacher practice and its impact on student learning.

At Spencer Park Primary School, we believe the product of classroom observation, as it is defined in this document, is owned by the classroom teacher being observed, including all notes, observations and feedback. **The observed classroom teacher *may choose to share these with their line manager, but only if they wish to do so. S/he is not obliged to do so.***

However, an important aspect of performance management is defining goals and areas of improvement, as they relate to practice, school and Departmental targets and policy. Conclusion and goals set by the classroom teacher can better inform and enhance engagement in this process

Classroom Observation and Performance Management can be shown to work together in this model:



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TEACHER SELF REFLECTION TEMPLATE



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TEACHER SELF REFLECTION TEMPLATE

CAPTURE YOUR REFLECTIONS ON POTENTIAL FOCUS AREA(A) FOR THE PEER OBSERVATION, including focus areas such as:

- Pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies
- Curriculum (content, provision and design)
- Assessment practices, including student feedback
- Student voice, leadership and agency
- Connections between lesson planning, lesson delivery and learning by students

DESCRIBE YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND/OR PEER OBSERVATIONS.

What was your experience with regard to:

- Determining your area of focus for the observation
- Engaging in conversations with teachers before an observation
- Your teaching practice when being observed
- Reflecting on and receiving feedback on your lesson

HOW MIGHT THIS IMPACT ON THE UPCOMING PEER OBSERVATION EXPERIENCE?



AT WHAT STAGE OF THE AITSL CLASSROOM PRACTICE CONTINUUM ARE YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL?

REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PEER OBSERVATION?

CAPTURE YOUR HOPES, FEARS AND EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE PEER OBSERVATION.

Hopes	Fears	Expectations
	<p><i>What would help alleviate these fears?</i></p>	

PRE-OBSERVATION CONVERSATION TEMPLATE



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PRE-OBSERVATION CONVERSATION TEMPLATE

THE AGREED PEER OBSERVATION FOCUS IS...

LINKS TO WHOLE-SCHOOL INITIATIVES AND KEY IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES...

THE TYPES OF EVIDENCE TO BE COLLECTED WILL BE...



PEER OBSERVATION PROCESS – DISCUSSION POINTS

Discussion Points	Summary of Discussion	Items for Action
PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION IN PEER OBSERVATIONS		
Consideration of previous participation in peer observation and implications for the planned peer observation.		
Consideration of outcomes, concerns or hesitations for the peer observation and implications for the planned peer observation.		
OBSERVATION DATA		
How the observer will organise, collect and store their observation data, using the observation template.		<i>For example, tailoring the peer observation template to include specific evidence.</i>
PROTOCOLS		
Discussion about the agreement with the school's peer observation protocols and consideration of any additional classroom based protocols that the observation experience may require. For example, individual student needs, the observer's role as it relates to the focus of the observation, introduction to students.		
DATE AND TIME		
Confirmation of the class, date and time for the observation to occur, including a timely post observation conversation.		
FURTHER ACTIONS		
Agreement of any further actions required prior to the peer observation.		
IMPACT		
The conduit and process for enabling the learning to inform whole-school practices. For example, professional learning communities, whole-school instructional practice, curriculum planning.		

PEER OBSERVATION TEMPLATE



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PEER OBSERVATION TEMPLATE

OBSERVATION DETAILS

Date	Time	Location
Staff Member Observed	Staff Member(s) Observing	
Group/Class/Year Level	Learning Focus	

THE PEER OBSERATION FOCUS IS...

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THE AGREED TYPES OF EVIDENCE TO BE COLLECTED DURING THE OBSERVATION WILL BE...

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CAPTURING YOUR OBSERVATIONS

SIGHT OBSERVATIONS

What did you see the teacher and the students doing in relation to the agreed focus area?

SOUND OBSERVATIONS

What did you hear the teacher and the students saying in relation to the agreed focus area?

EVIDENCE

Tailor this space to record specific measures according to the agreement during the pre-observation conversation and directly related to the observation focus.

QUESTIONS

The observer might have questions to clarify with the teacher after the observations or thoughts which can be listed here.

POST OBSERVATION CONVERSATION TEMPLATE



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POST OBSERVATION CONVERSATION TEMPLATE

CAPTURE YOUR THOUGHTS...

- Did the lesson provide basis for consideration of the focus of the observation?
- Providing specific examples, what were the areas of celebration – what went well?
- What could be improved to enhance student learning?
- What classroom routines could be changed to improve student learning?
- What are some potential areas for future focus to support improved professional learning and teaching practice?



CAPTURE YOUR THOUGHTS...

Enhancement to student learning might be achieved by improvement in teaching and learning practice in...

CONSIDER...

How can this link with the school improvement priorities and individual focus areas within the teacher's Performance Management Plan?



CAPTURE YOUR THOUGHTS...

What next?

- Is support needed to work on particular strategies?
- Is it possible to work with another teacher who has expertise with these strategies?
- Does something need to be discussed with a Performance Manager?
- Will a follow-up observation be needed?