

## Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

### 1 Purpose and Scope

Treehouse School regards the process of the observation of Teaching and Learning as a key aspect of our quality assurance cycle. It is a key element of the approach adopted by the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and a central mechanism for measuring and improving the quality of our provision.

Treehouse School is committed to providing a high quality learning environment, which ensures that all our pupils receive the best possible learning experience through a pupil centred approach. Our provision is designed to support children and young people with complex autism, whose behaviours can sometimes challenge. Many of our pupils will also experience communication difficulties. They need to develop skills that will be relevant and useful to them in their everyday lives, which match their aspirations and needs and which will enhance their quality of life. In order to deliver high quality learning, we need to regularly sample and evaluate the pupils' everyday experiences, through the use of an effective observation process, understood and owned by all, which draws on agreed principles of effective practice.

TreeHouse School is 'ACTIVE' in its values. We are:

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| <b>Ambitious</b>                     | We are ambitious for our children and young people with autism and their families. We are ambitious for our work.  |
| <b>Collaborative</b>                 | We work collaboratively with children and young people with autism and their families, in partnership with other organisations to maximize our impact and reach. |
| <b>Transparent &amp; Accountable</b> | We are open, transparent and accountable to our users and stakeholders.  |
| <b>Inclusive</b>                     | We strive to be accessible to all communities and to empower children and young people with autism across the UK.  |
| <b>eVidence</b>                      | We aim to build knowledge and skills and base our work on evidence of what works and share/disseminate to key internal/external stakeholders                     |
| <b>Effective</b>                     | We strive to provide the highest quality and values in our activities, services and resources.   |

Lesson observations enable us to be transparent and accountable about our practice; to be ambitious about our practice including setting goals and targets for improvement; to monitor our effectiveness through gathering observation evidence; to monitor how inclusive we are; and to work collaboratively as we identify, share and learn from good practice.

## **2 Why do we need to observe?**

- To develop staff. The process aims to be developmental and supportive, leading to improvement in standards and highlighting where training/more support for the individual is required.
- To evaluate the quality of the experience our pupils are receiving from every aspect of the provision. Including all the staff who work with the pupil and the environment.
- It is therefore a review of the whole pupil journey, not just a particular session. For this reason a thorough analysis will take place of every aspect of that journey, with particular emphasis on tracking how achievement and progress is made by the pupils and subsequently recorded in their folders.

## **3. Why graded observations?**

- Grades are a convenient way of managing data quantitatively.
- The grading system used is that adopted by Ofsted.  
Grade 1 = Outstanding  
Grade 2 = Good  
Grade 3 = Requires Improvement  
Grade 4 = Inadequate
- When the allocation of a poor grade is directly linked to the quality of teaching provided, then appropriate support will be identified for that individual and agreed in the action plan.
- Graded observations will also identify cross school issues as well as Leadership and Management Issues. Recommendations can then be made relating to changes in school procedures, policies, documentation, increased resources or staff development.

## **4. What to prepare for observations**

- The observers will request documentation to be in place for the observation, or in advance if necessary, in order to review the pupil's journey.
- These should be contained within a teaching file and will include all of the following;

- Medium-Term planning
- Evidence of Weekly Planning
- Individual Education Plans
- Base line assessments
- Annual Review Paperwork and Termly Curriculum Reports
- Communication plans
- Behaviour support strategies
- Group profile for the session including behaviour support strategies

#### **5. Who will be observed?**

- All lesson leaders are observed
- However it is important to note that all staff who have contact with the pupils contribute to the quality of the learning environment and therefore share responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning provided. This includes teachers, Allied Health Professionals, Vocational Specialists and ABA Tutors
- The feedback and associated grade will reflect an overall judgment about the quality of the pupils' experience and not just a judgement of the skills and competence of the person leading the session.
- The lesson leader is responsible for ensuring that the support and environment is planned and prepared adequately.
- Lesson Leaders will be graded for their observations and receive a written copy summarising the overall evaluation of the session and the factors underpinning the judgement.
- Additionally, ABA Tutors / Senior Tutors are observed annually as part of the school's Performance Development Review programme and Trainee ABA Tutors are observed as part of their assessment against the ABA Competency Framework. Arrangements for these observations are managed outside this policy

#### **6. What will be observed?**

- In order to evaluate the quality of the provision it is necessary to sample everything the pupils actually experience. This will include community based activities, therapy sessions, work experience and Lunch & Leisure activities
- A number of factors may influence the grade – the support provided, the appropriateness of grouping or resources. This will be made clear in the recording and an appropriate action plan suggested.
- It is not about putting on a show and doing something staff would not normally do.
- Observers will need to consider the quality of planning, as well as delivery and outcomes for pupils in terms of progress and how this is used to plan for future learning.

- To this end all documents supporting the pupil journey will need to be readily available prior to the observation.
- Other areas taken into consideration will be how the environment impacts on learning and what use is made of resources.
- An effective observation will analyse and identify what is needed to address any factors which adversely affect the quality of the learning experience.

#### **7. Who will carry out the observations?**

- Observations will be carried out by- School Leadership Team & External observers where appropriate.
- All observers will have appropriate experience and expertise.
- New observers will be paired with experienced observers and receive support and guidance.
- A proportion of all observations will be paired.

#### **8. Observation protocol**

- The observers will endeavour to be as unobtrusive as possible. It is recognised that some pupils will be affected by the presence of someone different in the session and this will be taken into account.
- Observers will not take an active part in the session in order for them to concentrate and make effective judgements.
- Opportunities may be taken to talk to the pupils about what they are doing, taking into account all of the above.
- Notes will be made on an observation form during the session and both observers will complete an observation form.
- Discussion will take place between both observers in order to agree outcomes and judgements before the initial verbal feedback is given.

#### **9. Frequency of observations**

- All Lesson Leaders will have at least one observation a year. In addition, however, staff may request additional observations or be allocated them as part of the action plan and developmental work.
- There will be no notice, in that individuals will be told on the Friday that their observation will take place the following week, but not informed of the exact session or activity to be observed.
- The observation will last for a minimum of 40 minutes and a maximum of 1 hour.
- It is possible that this may not allow for the observer to see the whole session and in some cases the observer may watch the beginning of the session and then return to see the conclusion. This would still count as one observation.

- Arrangements will be made to observe absent staff when they return.

#### **10. Moderation of observations**

- Moderation of the observation will take place in the SLT meeting following the observation.
- This process is essential in order to ensure consistency and objectivity.
- Governing Body are informed of key themes in the half-termly Head teacher's report

#### **11. Peer observations**

- Peer observations may be used to facilitate the sharing of best practice.
- Peers will feedback strengths and aspects of the observed session which they might adopt in their own practice, but no grade will take place.

#### **12. Feedback on observation**

- All staff will receive brief verbal feedback as soon as possible following their observed session and wherever possible on the same day. This will include strengths and areas for development, and grades will be fed back within 5 working days.
- Grade outcome and action planning will take place at the agreed date, with the line manager.
- All staff will have access to the relevant section of the written observation feedback at this time.
- The observer will use the formal feedback meeting to go through the form, explain the reasons for judgements and complete the section for actions. Identified actions to improve performance will be agreed and signed by both parties.

#### **13. Outcome of observation**

- The outcomes of the individual observations will be shared, either verbally or in writing, with all those contributing to the observed session as agreed in the action plan.
- Summative feedback of overall findings will be provided to the whole school and governors.
- Best practice will be shared across all areas of the school.
- Effective teamwork will be encouraged and awareness of the responsibilities of everyone in contributing to learning.
- As the process of observation is a developmental one, the term "areas for development" will be used rather than "weaknesses", when referring to aspects of an individual's work that would benefit from improvement.

- These areas of development should result in training needs being identified, both for individuals and the whole staff team.
- It could also result in additional observations being recommended and agreed.
- If the outcome of the observation is a grade 3 or below the re-observation will take place within 6 school weeks.
- If the re-observation results in a grade 3 or below then a formal meeting will take place, with the possibility of capability proceedings.
- Further review meetings will take place in order to quality assure the action plan and ensure that staff are receiving and partaking in any recommended development and training.
- It is important to note that action plans are not only provided for practice requiring improvement, but also for staff who demonstrate potential and would benefit from additional support in order to achieve “outstanding”. Or to identify how this good practice can be shared through becoming a mentor or contributing to training.
- Examples of all the forms used can be found at the end of this policy.
- Copies of the completed forms, signed by both the observer and the observee, will be provided to the observee and the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The copies will be kept on the employees’ file and stored securely and used for discussion and target setting within the individual’s PDR.
- The cycle of the observation process should result in the improvement and sustainability of performance over the year. However, if no such progress and improvement is made and a grade 4 observation is repeated, then this may result in the termination of contract for that member of staff.
- The outcome of the observations will also feed into the self-assessment process and provide evidence and demonstration of improvements in the quality of provision – for both the individual staff and the whole school.

#### **14. Appealing against an observation**

- Any member of staff who is unhappy about the feedback they have received can appeal against this, or about the management of the process.
- This must take the form of a written statement, to be submitted within five working days of the formal feedback meeting and made directly to the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher has carried out the observation, then the appeal can be made to another member of the observation team.
- All appeals will be brought to the attention of the chair of Governors and the Chief Executive of Ambitious about Autism. Where appropriate the appeal will be heard by someone external to the school.

## 16. Supporting documentation

### Annex 1

- 1.1 Blank formal observation form
- 1.2 Observation form annotated with guidance
- 1.3 Observation development plan
- 1.4 Informal observation form
- 1.5 Informal observation form annotated with guidance

### Annex 2

- 2.1 Pupil documentation review form
- 2.2 Pupil journey documentation review form annotated with guidance

### Annex 3

- 3.1 Observation of Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Checklist

### Annex 4

- 4.1 Prompts to support observers in identifying grades when observing staff working with young people with autism.

Name of Policy:	<b>Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b>
Contractual/Non-Contractual	<b>Non contractual</b>
Date last approved	<b>February 2016</b>
Policy reviewed by	<b>ELT</b>
Date to be reviewed	<b>January 2018</b>
Responsibility of which ELT member	<b>Rebecca Jones/ Sue Slynn</b>
Type of Policy	<b>TreeHouse School</b>