



ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE LESSON VISITS POLICY 2025 - 27

Introduction

1. This policy is intended to assist all staff included in learning visits as part of monitoring, training or College review process. The policy acknowledges the right of the Principal and others to observe a teacher at work, "as part of the Principal's responsibilities for evaluating the standards of teaching & learning in the College and ensuring that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained". *However, this will be undertaken in a professional, supportive and non-intimidatory way that serves the needs of the College and of the teachers. Classroom learning visits may be an informal part of the day-to-day running of the College or may be carried out within a formal framework for a specific purpose. Classroom learning visits comprise only one part of a college or teacher review. OFSTED emphasises the need for its inspectors to:

- Carry out work with professionalism, integrity and courtesy.
- Evaluate objectively.
- Report honestly and fairly.
- Communicate accurately.
- Act in the best interest of the pupils, and
- Respect the confidentiality of information gained.

The Governors believe that these principles should underpin all learning visits whatever their purpose.

Purpose

2. Learning Visits are carried out by Senior College staff, by colleagues or by outside agencies for a number of reasons. These may be:
 - As an informal classroom visit within the normal College day.
 - As part of an inspection by OFSTED, Diocese or SIP.
 - As part of an agreed programme of monitoring and support to a team or department to improve the quality of teaching, or in some instances as support to an individual teacher.
 - As part of a capability procedure as one means of gathering evidence, or as support for improvement strategies.
 - As part of ongoing training and development for students on teaching practice or for ECTs, other trainee teachers or teaching assistants.
 - By colleagues as part of CPD (Continuing Professional Development), departmental development or teambuilding.
 - To allow teachers to be able to make valid judgements and therefore inform Departmental development plans requiring judgements on the standard of learning and teaching.

- As part of SLT Review process to gather information on standards of Teaching and Learning in College.
- By Head of Department / Faculty as part of their monitoring process.
- As a part of the Performance management process

The main purpose of learning visits should always be to raise the quality of pupils' learning experience and it is against this backdrop that it should be viewed.

*** Teacher Pay and Conditions Document**

Visits are intended to allow the nominated observer to identify elements of good practice and development needs within the context of the teaching and learning that is under review.

Learning Visits may also be undertaken as learning or training experience for the observer, for example when a trainee teacher, School Direct, Teach First or ECT observes an experienced colleague or when colleagues observe each other to share good practice.

Process and Practice

3. The detailed procedures of learning visits will relate to the specific purpose of the visit being carried out. However, the Governors would wish to see the following:
 - Discussions with staff in advance, to indicate the purpose of the visit, the procedure to be followed and who will carry it out.
 - Teachers will normally be informed 5 days before any visit is to be carried out. There will be occasions however, where teachers are visited with little, or no notice. This could be with OFSTED or as part of SLT Review for example. No notice in the sense of an SLT review means only that staff will not know which lesson will be visited.
 - The observer should understand the context, aim and intended outcomes of the lesson and agree a focus or focuses of the visit with the teacher. These might include progress and achievement of pupils, challenge or assessment etc. To this effect, the teacher being observed for performance management purposes should produce a full lesson plan, with class data, using the official College format and this should be given to the observer at the start of the visit. Learning visits for other purposes should provide a seating plan with class data and a standard plan used by the member of staff. The observer also needs access to pupils' work during the lesson in order to assess progress, the level of work and quality of feedback.
 - Observer and teacher should be aware of the criteria to be used in the learning visit, how the visit will be recorded and what will happen to these records subsequently. The college Learning visit form uses the criteria in the Visible Consistencies and is freely available to all staff and governors.
 - The observer should record only information which is relevant and relates to the agreed criteria.
 - There should be a clear understanding before the lesson whether the observer will remain formally detached or will participate in the lesson.

Feedback

4. The benefit of classroom visits is greatest when appropriate feedback is given to the teacher. This should:
 - Be given as soon as possible after the visit and within 24 hours
 - Be part of a two-way discussion
 - Be based on factual information collected relevant to the agreed criteria
 - Take place in an appropriate setting during the normal working day, and
 - Include the teacher being given a copy of feedback report
 - A copy of the feedback is stored with the Principal/Vice Principal so that evaluation of the process and recommendations of the process can be made.

Feedback may lead to the discussion of possible follow-up work and/or future learning visit.

Summary

5. Learning Visits are one of a range of strategies which can enhance the important dialogue between teachers, and between teachers and those who manage them, on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning thereby raise the standards of teaching at St Michael's.

Learning Visits are intended to support the teacher. They should not be used as a weapon, or over-used so that they become burdensome to the teacher, e.g. it would be unreasonable for a teacher to be observed by several different parties on the same day.

July 2025



Signed:

Date: 25/09/25

Chair of the Curriculum Committee

Review Date: 2027