
**West Berkshire Council
Observation of Teaching and Learning Policy
Community Learning**



Statement of Intent

West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service observes community learning teachers and tutors as part of a wider process of quality monitoring, self-assessment and service planning.

Observing teachers and tutors improves our understanding of the content being delivered, the learners being engaged, the objectives to be achieved, the assessment of learner need and the effectiveness of the tutor or teacher. This information is used to inform future planning and professional development needs and/or requirements.

The intention of observations is to develop the quality of community learning in West Berkshire.

As a framework for observation, West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service uses the Ofsted [Education Inspection Framework](#) (EIF).

Objectives

- To develop a common understanding across the West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service funded providers of what constitutes good and outstanding teaching and learning;
- To support teachers and tutors to become more reflective practitioners with high expectations for what their learners can achieve;
- To monitor the quality of teaching and learning across providers, teachers, tutors and learning programmes; identifying areas of good practice and aspects where improvement is needed;
- To inform development planning and other quality improvement processes.

Context

The Lesson Observation Policy is part of a wider quality assurance process that supports the development of West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service and is based on:

- Criteria outlined in the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework.
- Areas of development identified following the [last Ofsted inspection of West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service](#).
- West Berkshire Council's strategic priorities.
- Local needs.

Lesson observations are not intended to be the sole means by which teachers and tutors improve their practice, the process is intended to be a positive learning process with teachers and tutors able to reflect and learn from valuable feedback on observed lessons.

The Community Learning Service supports a variety of methods to help teachers and tutors improve their teaching, learning and assessment practice and values the personal responsibility teachers demonstrate in participating in professional development practices to improve the teaching, learning and assessment experiences

for learners. These include peer observation, staff training, tutor forums and updates. A culture of responsibility for self-reflection and self-improvement is encouraged across all community learning tutors and providers.

Applicability

This policy applies to all teachers and tutors who deliver West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service supported adult and family learning.

- Each teacher and tutor will be observed in a formal observation at least once during the year.
- All new teachers and tutors who have not previously delivered adult and community learning in West Berkshire will be observed in the first term, as a developmental observation.
- Teachers and tutors employed by West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service commissioned providers who also deliver adult and community learning through direct ESFA funding will be observed in line with their employer's observation policy, usually as a joint observation between the employer provider and West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service.

Types of observation

- Developmental Observation Emphasis is on providing constructive feedback as well as identifying any appropriate support that may be required.
- Formal Observation Identifies strengths and areas of improvement. This is used as a base for dialogue that will enable the tutor to improve their practice.
- Learning walks Informal observations that take place throughout the year. Learning walks are exploratory, often around a theme, and should not exceed 20 minutes and verbal feedback will be offered.
- Peer observation Enable tutors to informally observe other teachers and tutors. There is an expectation that teachers and tutors will reflect on their learning from observing others and to identify improvements in their own practice as a result.
- All observations undertaken solely by the West Berkshire Council's Community Learning Service are ungraded.

Implementation

- Teachers and tutors will be given at least two weeks' notice of a Formal Observation. If there is a particular reason why that time/session would not be appropriate the observee should discuss the matter with the observer to arrange a suitable alternative.
- Learning walks will be carried out on an ad-hoc notice basis, but never without notice.
- Observations carried out during Ofsted inspections as specified in the Education Inspection Framework will be determined with notice where possible.

The Observation

- Observers will generally arrive at the beginning of the session, or following a scheduled break.
- Observers will normally observe for 20-30 minutes, allowing additional time for feedback. On occasion, observers may observe for longer if there is planned learning that is of particular interest.
- As part of the observation, the observer will want to see the learning, which will involve talking to learners, when appropriate, and looking at their work.
- Observers will want to see how teachers and tutors have planned their work, for example, looking at a scheme of work, lesson plan or assessment of learner needs.
- Observers will want to look at Individual Learning Plans to ensure learning goals have been identified and that learners are making progress towards achieving these goals.

Expectations

- Observers will carry identification with them at all times.
- Observers will not actively take part in the session unless invited to do so.
- Observers will ask the teacher/tutor to introduce them to the group and the reason for them being there (simply, to observe the teaching and their learning).
- Observers will agree with the tutor/teacher when it is best to talk to the learners to minimise disruption to learning.
- Observers will stop the session if they see a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a learner, teacher or other people in the session.
- Teachers/Tutors should provide information to the observer that may be pertinent, such as any learners' particular needs and requirements, health and safety instruction or safeguarding instruction.
- Teachers/Tutors should provide the observer with planning, assessment and attendance information.

The observation should not add to the teacher/tutor workload and we request that teachers and tutors do not plan or prepare the observed session in a way that is different from the originally planned session.

Feedback and Further Development

The observer will make notes and use these as a basis to provide feedback. These notes will be typed up within two weeks and sent to the teacher/tutor.

On occasion, if time does not allow, the observer may not be able to feedback immediately but will do so at the earliest opportunity.

The observer will feedback on areas of strength and areas for improvement and encourage similar reflection from the teacher/tutor.

The observer expects the teacher/tutor to take forward any improvement recommendation, for example, access a formal CPD opportunity, embark on peer support or seek to widen their own personal knowledge and skills.

The observer may ask to return to re-observe a future session, to see how the actions and improvements have been embedded.

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