

Section 1: Why observe Lessons?

The 3 main reasons for observing lessons:

- 1 To find out more about pupils' achievement:
- 2 To help find out why achievement is as it is:
- 3 To discover how to improve achievement:

To find out more about pupils' achievement

Data on pupils' achievement is only one part of a complicated jigsaw puzzle. By observing lessons it is possible to see progress in individual lessons, and in pupils' books, thus going beyond the limited information contained in the data. It is also possible to speak to pupils about aspects of their learning that are not always apparent from looking at their books, for example, whether they have an in-depth understanding of knowledge and skills.

To help find out why achievement is as it is

Whilst data and lesson observations give us a clear picture of pupils' achievement it is also important to know why achievement is as it is. Through a process of evaluation, it is possible to look at the teaching provided and judge which aspects of it impact positively on achievement and which require improvement.

To discover how to improve achievement

In discovering why achievement is as it is, the strengths and weaknesses of teaching become clearer. In discovering the positive aspects of teaching, leaders may spread the effective practice to other areas.

Section 2: What to look for - using learning lenses

The seven learning lenses





Progress

The most important measure of teaching is its impact on progress. The best progress is highly visible, measurable, rapid and sustained across all subjects. This lens gives the final check as to whether the efforts of teaching bring benefits in learning.

The other six lenses are all factors that affect progress. The progress lens needs, therefore, to be used in conjunction with all of the other lenses. Each lens will be explored in relation to how it promotes and helps to reveal progress.



Assessment

Whilst it is possible to make progress in almost anything, the assessment lens helps teachers to plan for progress for individuals in the right things, to the right, challenging standard. This lens concentrates mostly on lesson planning and it's importance in focusing lessons on individual needs.



Checking

The checking lens helps teachers to focus on the signs of progress during lessons. By continually checking on progress, teachers can maximise it and reshape their teaching as required.

Making judgements

	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching has a strong, positive impact on learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching has a positive impact on learning. 	Teaching, learning and assessment are not yet good.	Teaching, learning and assessment are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is poorly planned. Weak assessment practice means that teaching fails to meet pupils' needs. Pupils or particular groups are making inadequate progress because teaching does not develop their knowledge, understanding and skills sufficiently.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Teachers plan lessons very effectively, making maximum use of lesson time and coordinating lesson resources well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use effective planning to help pupils learn well. Time in lessons is used productively. Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers reinforce expectations for conduct and set clear tasks that challenge pupils. 		
Checking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers check pupils' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering clearly directed and timely support. Teachers use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate understanding of the ways pupils think about subject content. They identify pupils' common misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' responses and they reshape tasks and explanations so that pupils better understand new concepts. Teachers tackle misconceptions and build on pupils' strengths. 		

These descriptors are based on the Ofsted framework grade descriptors for the quality of teaching, September 2015.

Progress and teaching

OUTSTANDING

- A wide range of often inspirational teaching methods leads to highly motivated and enthusiastic pupils who make rapid progress
- High levels of pupil productivity maximises the time for learning
- Progress is highly visible due to the excellent tasks given, that expertly match the objective
- Every opportunity is used to reinforce basic skills.

GOOD

- A good range of teaching methods is used in most subjects
- Pupils quickly engage and remain engaged throughout lessons
- Progress is visibly good for almost all pupils
- A good level of pupil productivity can be seen as a result of the effective teaching methods used
- Basic skills are used well across the curriculum.

IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED

- Methods are usually limited to whole class delivery
- Introductions are lengthy and disengage some pupils
- A narrow range of methods leads to pupils making less than good progress
- Low pupil productivity in lessons
- Missed opportunities for using basic skills.

Example observation

Date: 11th July 2012 Teacher: Mrs Miggins Year: 4 Observer: Mr Darling Subject/Area: Mathematics

Context: This is a lesson reinforcing essential number knowledge. Teacher's assessment shows that although recall of tables is good, pupils still struggle to recall rapidly the 7 and 8 x tables. Data shows rapid progress for pupils in this class. Attainment is above the expected level according to teacher assessments.

	Strengths	Areas for improvements	Agreed action
Progress	Excellent progress made in recalling multiplication facts (7 & 8) and using them in practical contexts. Strong evidence of a deep understanding at Milestone 3. Most able pupils stretched by using associated division facts. SEND pupils independent but challenged well. As a result, excellent progress in acquiring knowledge of 7 & 8 x table. Excellent productivity throughout due to clarity of objective and well matched activities.	Some initial slower progress for one group of pupils due to checking methods.	Explore ways to put in place early progress checks, especially for the most able pupils.
Assessment	Accurate assessment used to plan differentiated work based on those who already knew but could not apply and those still acquiring knowledge. Accurate National Curriculum level pitch and suitable challenge for most able. Good task matching.		Agreed to work with Year 5 teacher, who finds assessment in mathematics difficult without testing pupils.
Checking	In discussion with pupils, they said they knew what they had done well and why this was. This is due to the teacher and assistant giving clear feedback. Whilst all made improvements as a result of feedback, one or two were not challenged by it.	One or two pupils were not challenged to improve beyond the expectations of the lesson. They had time and scope to do this.	Identify next steps for those pupils who exceed expectations so as to maximise progress. Do this at the planning stage.
Marking	Systematic checking throughout lesson, apart from one group in early part of lesson. Checking did not put on hold the learning of others.	Progress for around 5 pupils was initially limited due to lack of early checking. Teaching assistant slow to move from target group to check on progress of these 5 pupils.	Training for teaching assistant in checking techniques: in-house next Wednesday.
Teaching	Pupils were working productively within minutes of the lesson starting. Techniques such as 'sort it' helped pupils to work collaboratively, deciding on criteria for themselves. The lesson was punctuated by many different and highly appropriate activities.		
Basic Skills	Excellent emphasis on pupils reading questions for themselves. Excellent use of previously learned knowledge and high expectation of recalling number facts.		
Attitudes	Excellent focus on concentration and work ethic. Activities encouraged pupils to use imagination. Feedback helped pupils to develop the motivation to improve. Excellent use of collaboration. Behaviour was exemplary.		Work with neighbouring school to share our effective practice in shaping positive attitudes: longer term project, beginning September.