

Lesson Observation Policy

This year's cycle of lesson observations commenced in September and was undertaken for all the teaching staff. The approach was positive and aimed to highlight the aspects that are being done well. Areas of the teachers' practice that need further development have been identified. A written report and tutorial feedback were provided for each teacher following the observation. Several teachers had more than one observation to reinforce their targets. We do not wish to be overly prescriptive and to allow colleagues scope to develop their skills appropriately. The checklist below compiles the key features that we look for in order to deliver a good lesson:

- 1. Lesson objectives clearly stated and ideally written on the board at the start.*
- 2. Accurate attendance data – register is completed within 10 minutes.*
- 3. Challenge lateness.*
- 4. Three-part lesson structure or another suitable plan.*
- 5. Aiming for a variety of teaching styles and making the subject interesting.*
- 6. Enthusiastic teaching*
- 7. Inclusive and systematic questioning, getting around all members of the class.*
- 8. Open questioning to elicit deeper knowledge.*
- 9. Differentiated learning activities and learning outcomes; accommodating the range of student abilities within the group. 'Stretch' and 'Challenge.'*
- 10. Using student names for engagement.*
- 11. Good lesson presentation, clear board writing, handouts, projector displays.*
- 12. Using technology, practical demonstrations, molecular models in science lessons or any object or exhibit that is suitable for the subject.*
- 13. Modelling difficult ideas with simpler, more familiar examples and analogies.*
- 14. Assessing the students, providing good formative feedback.*
- 15. Learning indicators.*
- 16. Evidence of attainment.*
- 17. Formative assessment: 'What went well; even better if...'*
- 18. Good rapport/ relationship with students.*
- 19. Praise, affirmation of good answers and progress.*
- 20. Plenty of recaps/mini-plenaries linking back to the initial learning objectives.*
- 21. Plenary for at least five minutes to clarify and consolidate the key points.*
- 22. Trying to keep the classroom environment engaging and interactive.*
- 23. Good time-keeping, ensuring that the lesson finishes on time.*

As the programme of lesson observations progressed, a cumulative list of 'Tips for Even Better Lessons' was issued to staff and displayed in the staff room. This was added to as more features to work on became apparent. This provided a summary of better practice indicators, based upon the teachers' delivery this term. The most recent summary is reproduced below. Teaching colleagues

were encouraged to incorporate as many of these features and check their own lesson planning to ensure that these are being incorporated.

TIPS FOR EVEN BETTER LESSONS

- *Lesson planning should involve opportunities for academic and personal development.*
- *The three-part lesson should become embedded good practice.*
- *Separate your teaching and student note-taking; allow them time to complete notes without simultaneously trying to follow the teacher discussion.*
- *Ask more open-ended questions requiring explanatory answers rather than closed-questions which only require quick factual recall.*
- *Develop more challenge and thinking skills, questions requiring deeper thought.*
- *Give quiet, uninterrupted episodes for students to reflect and work independently in order to produce better answers and to solve problems.*
- *Break up the lesson to avoid student concentration flagging, happens typically after about half an hour.*
- *Get one or two up at the board, the ideal lesson is not all didactic and teacher led.*
- *Make links with conceptually simpler examples, use everyday models or analogies.*
- *Bring in an object or simple demonstration, be inventive.*
- *Recap frequently (mini-plenaries) and repeat important points as you say them.*
- *Physically move around the class to check student progress, giving proper time individually; intervention gives the teacher insight and can resolve subject issues.*
- *Address the students using their names.*
- *Be systematic in making sure all students get to answer questions.*
- *Know what's going on in your teaching room, no inappropriate use of mobile phones etc. ...have eyes in the back of your head!*
- *Always challenge student lateness, briefly at the time or deal with it later.*
- *A closing plenary arising out of the lesson is essential.*

Updated on September, 2025
next review September, 2026