

Joint Lesson Observations

**Schools, Further Education and Work-Based Learning
inspections, district and specialist visits**

September 2015

INTRODUCTION

Joint lesson/session observations provide an opportunity for the leader¹ of an organisation or a designated observer² from within the organisation to participate in a lesson/session observation(s) alongside an inspector. **Joint lesson/session observations are offered during five-day primary, post-primary, special, further education and work-based learning inspections and district and specialist visits.** Following the observation the leader or designated observer and the inspector will have an opportunity to evaluate and moderate the quality of learning and teaching observed. The teacher/lecturer/tutor will also engage in professional dialogue with the designated observer and the inspector about the quality of learning and teaching observed.

The joint lesson/session observation may be undertaken by the leader of the organisation or a designated observer. Where a designated observer has been nominated, all arrangements should be agreed with the leader of the organisation.

The leader or designated observer may also wish to undertake the role of the representative³ or the organisation may wish to nominate another member of staff to this role. Both roles are offered to organisations on a voluntary basis.

RATIONALE

1. To demonstrate the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) core principles of openness and transparency through collaborative working.
2. To develop a closer relationship between the inspection process and the organisation's self-evaluation outcomes.
3. To build an organisation's capacity for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

¹ Reference to the *leader of the organisation* means in school a principal, in FE as the principal/chief executive or a member of the senior management team, and in WBL as head and/or senior manager/leader of the organisation.

² Reference to the *designated observer* means a member of senior management who has been nominated by the leader of the organisation to carry out the joint lesson observations with an inspector.

³ See *The Role of the Representative in the Inspection Process* available on the ETI website at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/what-we-do/support-material/support-material-general-documents-non-phase-related/support-material-general-documents-about-inspection/joint-lesson-observations-guidance.htm>

4. To heighten the awareness of the senior management on the importance of focusing more clearly on the learning within the lesson/session that occurs as a result of the teaching.
5. To develop a common understanding of what 'good' learning and teaching looks like.

COMPONENTS

1. During the initial contact at the pre-inspection stage of a programmed inspection or when making arrangements for a district or specialist visit the district (DI), specialist (SI) or reporting inspector (RI) will discuss with the leader the opportunity for joint lesson/session/activity observation.
2. If the organisation wishes to participate, the leader will confirm who in the organisation will undertake the joint observations and the name/s of the teachers/tutors willing to be observed and will arrange a timetable with the DI, SI or RI.
3. During the observation the leader/designated observer will complete a lesson observation form provided by the DI/RI/SI.
4. During the observation the leader/designated observer and the inspector will look at class books/portfolios/samples of learners' ⁴work, scrutinise planning and talk to the learners.
5. The leader/designated observer and the inspector should keep interaction with each other to a minimum as this may distract the teacher/lecturer/tutor and/or the learners from the planned activities.
6. As part of the capacity-building element the leader/designated observer should discuss the strengths and areas for improvement in the lesson with the inspector (with the observer leading).
7. When key areas for discussion have been agreed the leader/designated observer will provide professional feedback to the teacher/lecturer/tutor in the presence of the inspector.
8. The evaluation will be based on objective first-hand evidence gathered from the observation.

PROTOCOLS

- Joint observations may only take place in organisations where the leader is in agreement with the process.

⁴ Learners refers to pupils, students and young people.

- The number of joint observations conducted will be agreed and will be determined by the nature of the inspection activity and the size of the organisation being inspected.
- Teachers/lecturer/tutors should be asked by the leader to 'volunteer' to take part in the joint observation and the name of the observer should be made known to the teacher/lecturer/tutor.
- The joint observation may be undertaken by the DI, SI or any member of ETI.
- The DI/RI/SI will make clear the process, purposes and principles of the joint observation with the designated observer, the leader (if not the observer) and the teacher/lecturer/tutor.
- The leader and/or the designated observer will be aware of the format of the lesson/session observation proforma prior to the observation, either by email or pre-inspection visit.
- The leader and/or designated observer will make the necessary arrangements for observation within the classroom/training/ activity area including the provision of seating and relevant documentation.
- Any changes to the agreed timetable should be arranged with the DI/RI/SI and the consent of the teacher//lecturer/tutor and the organisation leader.
- The meeting for exchange of professional dialogue with the teacher/lecturer/tutor should be carried out in an area where confidentiality is maintained.
- All discussions with the teacher/lecturer/tutor must be based on first-hand evidence and focus on the learning that took place during the lesson/session.
- If teaching is evaluated as unsatisfactory the member of ETI will follow current ETI procedures.
- The leader/designated observer should sign and date the completed proforma, including any comments by the teacher/lecturer/tutor if significant, and return any notes to the inspector as this forms part of the inspection evidence base.
- The agreed evaluation of the lesson/session forms part of the overall inspection evidence.

THE ROLE OF THE LEADER/DESIGNATED OBSERVER IN JOINT LESSON OBSERVATIONS

In agreeing to take part in joint lesson/session observations the leader/ designated observer will:

- seek agreement from the teacher/lecturer/tutor(s) willing to participate in joint observations;

- adhere to the ETI code of conduct;⁵
- adhere to the principle that the purpose of undertaking any observation is to bring about improvement in the quality of learning and teaching in the interest of all learners;
- make any necessary arrangements as directed by the lead inspector, with the teacher(s) involved;
- observe and evaluate learning, teaching and training in an objective manner;
- record accurately the evaluation of the lesson/session using the ETI observation proforma;
- engage in professional dialogue with the inspector prior to and after the joint observation (dialogue between the inspector and the leader/designated observer during the lesson may be distracting to the teacher/lecturer/tutor and/or the learners) ;
- engage in professional dialogue with the teacher /lecturer/tutor observed in order to promote improvement;
- base all discussions on accurate and reliable first-hand evidence:
- balance the engagement with the teacher/lecturer/tutor in terms of strengths and areas for consideration; and
- ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all time.

⁵ The Charter for Inspection document can be found at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/what-we-do/a-charter-for-inspection.htm>