



BENSHAM MANOR *School*

Learning Walks and Lesson Observation Policy

Last reviewed: September 2026



1. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes a shared approach to Learning Walks and Lesson Observations at Bensham Manor School. It has been developed with reference to Department for Education (DfE) guidance, the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), Ofsted inspection principles, the National Education Union (NEU) Model Classroom Observation Policy and recognised good practice promoted by professional associations and trade unions. It reflects our commitment to high-quality teaching, professional trust, staff wellbeing and continuous improvement.

Our school values of Safe, Ready and Kind underpin this policy. Quality assurance activities should enable every member of staff to feel safe to reflect, ready to develop and treated with kindness and respect. Learning Walks and Lesson Observations improve outcomes for all students through professional dialogue, collaboration and shared learning. They are developmental, not judgemental, and will not be used to grade teachers or as evidence for capability procedures.

2. Guiding Principles

Principle	Our Commitment
Safe	Processes promote psychological safety, respect and openness.
Ready	Quality assurance supports learning, curriculum development and improvement.
Kind	Feedback is constructive, respectful and solution-focused.
Professional Trust	Teaching is evaluated over time using a range of evidence.
Wellbeing	Processes are proportionate and avoid unnecessary workload.
Evidence-informed	No single visit provides a complete picture of teaching and learning.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governors** – Approve and review this policy and ensure quality assurance remains fair, proportionate and aligned with current guidance.
- **Headteacher** – Ensure Learning Walks and Lesson Observations are planned, communicated and implemented consistently and feedback supports school improvement.
- **Senior and Middle Leaders** – Conduct Learning Walks professionally, gather objective evidence, celebrate effective practice and facilitate professional dialogue.
- **Teaching and Support Staff** – Engage positively with agreed quality assurance processes and contribute to a collaborative culture of reflection and improvement.

4. Learning Walks

Learning Walks are planned, short visits to classrooms focusing on agreed whole-school priorities such as curriculum implementation, adaptive teaching, Trauma Informed, literacy, safeguarding, assessment and the learning environment. Wherever possible, staff will be informed of the purpose and focus in advance.

Learning Walks will:

- focus on whole-school themes rather than individual performance
- normally involve no more than three visitors
- be brief and minimise disruption
- record objective evidence linked to the agreed focus

- promote professional dialogue and shared learning.

Visitors may ask students about their learning, success criteria and how they are supported. Students will never be asked to evaluate members of staff.

Learning Walks will not be used to grade lessons, compare teachers or provide evidence for appraisal or capability.

5. Lesson Observations

Lesson Observations are distinct from Learning Walks. They are planned in advance with an agreed purpose and include professional discussion before and after the observation. Feedback is developmental, evidence-informed and intended to support professional growth. Lesson observations are not graded and should be considered alongside a wider range of evidence.

Schedule

Autumn Term – Lesson Observation 30 – 35 mins

Spring Term – Learning Walk 15 mins. In any lesson and staff members will be visited once

Summer Term – Lesson Observation 30 – 35 mins

6. Feedback, Wellbeing and Professional Dialogue

Feedback from Learning Walks will normally be shared at whole-school level to celebrate strengths, identify effective practice and inform priorities. Staff may request access to notes relating to their classroom. Lesson Observations will provide direct feedback to the member of staff. In line with DfE workload principles and current professional guidance, quality assurance activities will remain proportionate and avoid unnecessary workload.

7. Sources of Evidence

Leaders evaluate teaching and learning using a balanced range of evidence including:

- Learning Walks
- Lesson Observations
- Professional dialogue
- Work scrutiny
- Student voice
- Assessment information such as Trackable
- Curriculum documentation
- Behaviour, attendance and safeguarding information

No single source of evidence is used to reach conclusions about teaching quality.

8. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy every two years following consultation with leaders, staff and recognised trade unions where appropriate. The policy will continue to reflect changes to DfE guidance, STPCD, Ofsted inspection principles and recognised professional guidance.

Appendix A – Frequently Asked Questions

Will Learning Walks be graded?

No. Learning Walks are not graded and are not used to judge individual teachers.

Can students be spoken to?

Yes. Questions relate to learning and curriculum, not to evaluating staff.

Will I receive feedback?

Whole-school feedback is normally provided for Learning Walks and one to one feedback for Lesson Observations. You may request notes relating to your own classroom.

Are Lesson Observations the same as Learning Walks?

No. Lesson Observations are planned professional development activities with agreed feedback and Learning Walks focus on agreed whole school priorities.

Appendix B – Learning Walk Code of Conduct

Visitors will	Visitors will not
Be respectful and professional	Judge individual teachers
Focus on students' learning	Grade lessons
Minimise disruption	Compare staff
Collect objective evidence	Use Learning Walks for appraisal or capability
Celebrate effective practice	Ask pupils to evaluate teachers

Appendix C – Lesson Observation Code of Conduct

Observers will...	Observers will not...
Agree the purpose and focus of the observation in advance.	Carry out unplanned formal lesson observations except where required by statutory processes.
Conduct observations professionally, respectfully and with minimal disruption.	Grade lessons or assign performance ratings.
Focus on agreed success criteria and professional development.	Reach conclusions about teaching quality using only one lesson observation.
Provide timely, constructive feedback supported by professional dialogue.	Use observations as evidence for capability unless formal capability procedures have already commenced.
Recognise strengths and identify agreed next steps.	Compare teachers against one another.
Maintain confidentiality and respect professional trust.	Share individual feedback beyond those who need to know.