

The Off Sted **CODE**

By D.A.N.Browne



The Code Has Been Broken!

Just imagine if you had the luxury of taking a few days off to go through all the Inspection Reports for the last year and pull out those parts which refer to Lesson Observations...

Well Guess What!

We've done it for you – we have cut through all the “coded” language to bring you the most concise and informative summary of report extracts there is. What follows is the best guide to Ofsted thinking we know of – because it's all in their words.

Take a look at the quotes below (taken from recent Ofsted inspections) to see the common themes both good and bad identified by inspections plus inspectors' suggestions to providers of what action needs to be taken to be outstanding. Each paragraph below (in alternating blue/black colours) is from a different Ofsted report.

Observation Weaknesses

Managers do not collate and analyse the outcomes of observations, including strengths and areas for improvement, to provide an overview of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not link the outcomes of observations, annual staff appraisals and monthly individual meetings to manage staff performance effectively and do not set staff clear performance targets. Managers do not ensure effective training and support for trainers so that they improve their performance.

Actions to improve teaching and learning are not robust enough and managers are insufficiently aware of whether standards have improved.

Managers do not analyse the observations and are unable to state the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment.

Measures to monitor and improve the quality of training and assessments are not fully effective; managers do not analyse or evaluate information on trends in apprentices' progress and achievements well enough

The senior management team as a whole does not scrutinise sufficiently key aspects of the provision, such as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, as a result, does not bring about improvements quickly enough

The observation process does not cover all elements of the learners' time in training and action plans following observations are not always fully effective in leading to improvement

Managers carry out observations, but these do not always identify weaknesses; in particular, they do not focus sufficiently on what learners learn.

Observations of teaching, learning and assessment do not accurately evaluate learning, and staff development plans do not support trainers to improve their practice sufficiently

Arrangements for improving training, learning and assessment are not sufficiently developed.

Teaching and learning observations have not been accurate enough to improve the quality of trainers' teaching and their understanding of learning, as the focus is not sufficiently on apprentices' learning and progress.

Managers observe assessors across the full range of activities that support apprentices' learning; feedback from these observations identifies some, but not enough of the improvements assessors can make to enhance the learning achieved during each activity, as observers focus insufficiently on learning and progress. Results of these observations inform effective monthly performance monitoring meetings but do not contribute with sufficient clarity and detail to staff appraisal.

The observation of training and assessment is not focused sufficiently on developing assessors' skills in challenging apprentices so that they make good progress and learn in every session

General matters arising from observations are discussed at regular standardisation meetings but managers have not put formal arrangements in place to ensure that assessors benefit from individual staff development opportunities arising from their observation feedback.

The systematic monitoring and quality assurance of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment and of the learners' experience is insufficient. The company aims to observe formally all trainers at least once a year but has not met this aim. Staff are not sufficiently aware of the key strengths and areas for improvement across all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment or about the key areas they need to work on to secure improvements in the quality of their work with learners. Consequently, action planning to secure timely improvements for learners is not sufficiently effective.

Leaders and managers do not have a clear view of the quality of teaching learning and assessment and are misled by the inadequate lesson observation scheme; it does not extend to training at work or include a focus on the development of English, mathematics, employability skills or equality and diversity.

Extend the lesson observation process to apprentices' work places.

The observation of teaching, learning and assessment is not sufficiently focused on learners and learning to enable managers to improve further the standard of teaching and learning

Managers systematically observe teaching and assessment sessions and provide trainers and subcontractors with useful feedback to help them improve. However, during observations, managers do not evaluate sufficiently the impact trainers have on learning or how this affects learners' progress towards achieving their qualifications

Managers have successfully increased the number of apprenticeship programmes and traineeships, but have not been as effective in monitoring the quality of their subcontracted provision. They have not overseen closely enough the training of all assessors and the sharing of good practice to ensure all subcontractors perform to the same high standards.

Managers' monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and learning and assessment is weak and does not adequately identify areas for improvement, with too much focus on describing tutor activity rather than evaluating the quality of learning.

Observations of teaching and learning in the workplace are not yet part of the process, and managers' feedback to tutors does not provide the detail necessary for them to improve.

Managers should monitor the action plans from observations more closely to ensure that provision continues to improve.

Quality assurance arrangements, including performance management, are inadequate. Leaders and managers do not adequately monitor or evaluate the quality of provision or use data to identify underperformance.

The quality of learning and assessment is not adequately monitored and no formal, systematic observation process is in place.

Part-time staff are often unable to attend briefing meetings and managers have failed to provide staff with sufficient targeted development opportunities to help them improve their practice.

The system to improve teaching and assessment through observations of learning is not effective enough because observations do not always identify key areas for improvement. Observers give insufficient attention to assessing the impact of training and planning. Managers have not ensured all learners receive consistently good teaching. They have not analysed sufficiently the key strengths and areas for improvement in training and assessment

Despite some changes made to the observations of teaching and learning arrangements after the last inspection, the arrangements are not yet effective in improving the quality of provision. The observation process and paperwork focus too much on what trainers do, rather than the impact of their actions on learning. Action plans following observations are not sharply focused on identified areas for development.

Managers do not plan their observations of assessors well enough. Their records of observations focus too much on the strategies used by assessors and trainers and lack a sufficient evaluation of the learning that takes place and the progress individual learners make. "The process of observing and evaluating teaching and learning is not a key driver in quality improvement."

"Observation and feedback process to ensure continued development of instructors is ineffective, and sessions are not currently graded. As a result, instructors and managers are not able to identify accurately key areas for improvement. Compounding this weakness is the lack of a formal appraisal process."

"The current system is too focused on a mechanistic approach against set criteria and consequently lacks clear judgements about areas requiring improvement, leading to insufficiently specific or detailed action plans"

"Where teaching is judged to require improvement or to be inadequate, trainers undergo more frequent observation. However, although extremely detailed, written feedback does not always make sufficient reference to subject content or how successfully learners are learning and does not always identify clearly how trainers can improve their practice."

Lesson observations do not set teachers clear enough targets or identify sufficiently how they can improve their practice and the outcomes of their learners. The current observation process does not focus sufficiently on measuring learning.

A thorough system for improving teaching and learning through observation and professional development has not yet been established.

The observation process, the follow up to it and the individual action planning all require further development to more accurately and fully meet individual staff needs. The current observation policy does not focus sufficiently on learners and learning.

Although the system for observing teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection, not all observations are sufficiently evaluative and used to improve the quality of staff delivery.

The judgements made by observers are close to those made by inspectors, but associated improvement plans do not contain sufficiently specific, measurable action points to ensure consistently good or better standards of teaching, learning and assessment are offered to all learners.

Lesson observation judgements are focused insufficiently on evaluating the quality of learning or the progress made by students

Observation of teaching and learning is not currently taking place, and the findings from the observation of assessment are not used sufficiently well to improve learners' experience on their programmes.

Since the previous inspection, lesson observations have not been sufficiently or consistently carried out and too many teachers working for subcontractors have not been observed for some considerable time. There has not been enough sharing of good practice between sub-contractors.

The formal observation process is designed to focus on the learning which is taking place, rather than the activities of the trainer. However, it does not cover the whole of the provision. The assessors on the apprentice programme are observed by internal verifiers rather than trainers, and the focus on their role in supporting learning is not so explicit. The arrangements do not cover the subcontracted provision, which has not yet implemented its own programme of observations. There is not yet enough sharing of good practice at curriculum level across the whole of the provision.

Observing and improving teaching and learning are underdeveloped.

Observations of teaching, learning and assessment do not identify existing good practice to ensure that it can be shared effectively, or to find common areas for improvement.

Managers do not make full use of lesson observations as a means of continuing to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The observation process has been ineffective in giving tutors and assessors clear guidance on how to improve their delivery.

Outcomes from lesson observations do not always lead to robust action plans that are reviewed through appraisals.

Strong performance management of staff, taking into account learner evaluations, outcomes and observation grades, has made a positive difference to quality. The well-planned and regular observation system is not yet sufficiently refined to judge the quality of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. The sharing of best practice across subcontracted provision is not sufficiently systematic.

Not all managers are adept enough at developing a sufficiently self-critical approach to target-setting for staff and to their observations of teaching and learning in order to bring about sustained improvements in the quality of lessons and in learners' outcomes.

A tendency for observers to focus too much on teaching rather than the impact on students is evident in records. As a consequence, managers have an over-optimistic view of the quality of teaching and learning from lesson observations

Some provision currently has no recent observation grades.

Observation Strengths

Strategies to improve teaching, learning and assessment are particularly effective. Managers have revised the college observation process to ensure a comprehensive range of evidence is available to plan improvements. Formal and informal observations and the use of students' views help managers to identify areas needing further improvement.

Highly effective and developmental feedback is provided on individual staff performance following observations of all aspects of the learning programme. Feedback is clearly linked to performance management as part of the staff appraisal and development process

Managers provide good support for staff through a well-established programme of continuing professional development linked to appraisals and observations of learning sessions

Arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching are well conceived and effective. The observation of teaching process is rigorous. Managers moderate the outcomes of lesson observations carefully and ensure they identify, and disseminate, good practice.

Strong performance management of staff, taking into account learner evaluations, outcomes and observation grades, has made a positive difference to quality.

The programme of staff development is closely linked to meeting the needs of teachers identified from observation of teaching, learning and assessment. Professional development takes place immediately, is well considered and helps teachers improve, even when they are judged to deliver outstanding lessons.

The college uses graded lesson observations effectively to monitor the quality of teaching and learning during curriculum area reviews and through risk-based targeted observation.

Records of observations have a better focus on evidence that shows learners' progress over time, not just in the specific lesson observed. They also focus more on the quality of the learning environment.

The recently introduced observation of teaching and learning scheme is providing better assurance of the quality of teaching and assessment and observers' records of observations make clear what teachers and assessors need to do to develop their practice

Managers use the outcomes of teaching and learning observations well to plan continuous staff development to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The management of staff performance is good and informed well through very effective teaching and learning observation and staff appraisal processes. All staff are appropriately qualified

Managers have taken swift action to improve the rigour of their performance management system. They are starting to gain a more reliable picture, through new observation arrangements, of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Observers are focusing more on the quality of learning, an area for improvement identified at the inspection

A comprehensive process for the observation of teaching and learning, which includes short-notice graded observations and whole centre inspections, effectively identifies actions for improvement. Tutors routinely share best practice and benefit from individually targeted professional development.

Links between teaching and learning observations and annual staff professional development reviews are clear and well regarded by staff and managers alike.

Teachers and assessors improve their teaching and professional skills as a result of a rigorous and comprehensive lesson observation process that integrates effectively with a highly successful system of performance.

Ofsted's Recommendations to Providers Inspected

Introduce systems to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of training and assessment for all aspects of the apprenticeships offered, including on-the-job training, induction and reviews, so that managers and trainers understand what needs to be done to improve the provision.

Enhance the overall standard of teaching, learning and assessment by developing a more robust observation process that effectively monitors and evaluates the quality of learning and progress and use the information to target improvement actions

Extend the observation of teaching, learning and assessment to encompass all key processes involving the learner.

Introduce a clear moderation process for observation findings and grades to ensure consistency and accuracy.

Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and learning through training for lesson observers in how to identify those aspects of teachers' good practice that require improvement to make them outstanding practitioners and by observing outstanding practice in other colleges

Implement planned formal observations of teaching, learning and assessment and ensure that through performance management and support, trainers and assessors improve their practice so that all learners experience provision of high quality.

Ensure that observation reports give all assessors a clear action plan to help them develop and improve their training and assessing skills; monitor the outcomes of this plan at the next observation. Share the good practice observed with other assessors

Ensure the process for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment helps observers focus on what learners learn in each session, the progress they make, the extent to which they are challenged to reach their potential and how well their learning is checked and reinforced
Share good practice of the outstanding aspects of the provision so that best practice can be adopted by all subject areas

Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching, learning and assessment through more opportunities to share good practice; a continued focus on maintaining the rigour of lesson observations; improved planning of lessons; and more detailed feedback to learners about what they need to do to improve their work.

Ensure the observation of teaching, learning and assessment process focuses more effectively on apprentices' learning during each activity, and that assessors receive more detailed feedback after each observation

Improve teaching, learning and assessment by providing staff development that is carefully targeted to address the areas for development identified through the observation of tutors.

Improve the rigour of the lesson observation process so that it identifies more clearly the impact that teaching and assessment activities have on learning and progress; implement sharply-focused action plans for improvement

Improve the observation of training and assessment by focusing it on what apprentices are learning, how well this learning is checked and reinforced, how well they are being challenged to achieve their full potential and whether they are making good progress against their starting points

Improve the lesson observation process by extending the criteria to include the evaluation of English, mathematics, employability skills and equality and diversity themes. Focus judgements on the quality of learning in order to provide clear actions for staff development to improve the quality of provision.

Identify the good practice that does exist in the college and ensure that, through staff development, underperforming teachers learn from good teachers

Raise standards in learning and assessment by carrying out observations of practice that identify weaknesses and lead to successful actions for improvement. Extend arrangements to improve further the quality of teaching and learning so that more learners receive outstanding quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that the observations of teaching and learning sessions are always evaluative, accurate and used to increase the capacity of staff to improve their teaching practices further.

Implement the planned system for improving teaching and learning through observations linked to professional development and performance management.

Prioritise observations on provision that is potentially at risk and in those areas where managers are less knowledgeable about the quality of provision.

Implement clear professional development strategies where teachers, trainers and assessors are below good and apprentices' progress is at risk.

Further Improve teaching and learning by regular and insightful informed observations of teaching and learning sessions leading to appropriate actions plans for development , supported by informed coaching and development activity.

Gather information to provide a clear overview of the expertise and capacity of assessors and trainers

Extend and strengthen arrangements to assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including the use of observation, in order to ensure that all instructors and trainers adopt best practice in improving learning

Extend the arrangements for observing teaching and learning to all of the provision, including the apprenticeship programme and the subcontracted provision. Use the findings from these observations to share good practice. In particular, develop the skills of coaching for assessors, and support the new team at the subcontracted provision in developing their practice and resources in teaching and learning, especially for functional skills and the personal and social development programme.

Improve teaching, learning and assessment practice by further developing the session observation process to ensure that teaching and its impact on how well learners learn, is better evaluated and used to improve teachers' professional practice.

Monitor the quality of lesson observers' practice through collaborative working and reviewing lesson observation reports.

Review and further develop the existing teaching and learning observation system, to ensure that it focuses sufficiently on measuring learning. Observers should receive sufficient training to allow them to

identify good teaching and to highlight areas for improvement, measured against clear criteria, to offer an unequivocal view of the quality of learning at every stage of the learner's journey and for each teacher and assessor.

Ensure that lesson observations add value to the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment.

Focus lesson observation judgements and feedback on the quality of learning. Ensure that subsequent staff training builds upon existing good practice.

In lesson observations, increase managers' skills in observing and recording the impact of teaching on learners' progress. Enable managers to support teachers in developing better teaching methods to improve learners' deeper understanding of subject material.

Ensure that target setting for staff arising out of appraisals is sharply focused on what teachers need to do to improve their practice.

Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, learning and assessment across the college by using the lesson observation system to identify, monitor and disseminate best practice.

Further improve teaching and learning by making sure that managers clearly identify the skills and training that teachers need to continue to improve their practice, and link lesson observation outcomes to appraisals.

Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, learning and assessment across the college by using the lesson observation system to identify, monitor and disseminate best practice.

Develop the quality of teaching, learning assessment and review through effective observation of all aspects of learners' programmes, which give tutors and assessors clear guidance on how to improve.

Further Improve teaching and learning by regular and insightful informed observations of teaching and learning sessions leading to appropriate actions plans for development , supported by informed coaching and development activity.

What Happens Next?

You are probably wondering: “What can I do to make sure I get the sort of glowing Inspection Report comments shown above?”

As it happens, we have the solution – a comprehensive system of recording and tracking observations, action point follow ups and CPD. To make it an easily shared resource, hosting of the system by us is included in the annual charge. This also ensures that sharing good practice is very easy to implement – and as you will have seen this is a major issue for inspectors.

There are videos and other information on Observation Manager available at

www.TeachingPlusLearning.co.uk

**Or call us on 01985 844087 for an information pack or
an on-line demo of the system.**



[Click to watch the video on Youtube](#)