Learning Observations Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed
Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Introduction

1.1 At GFS we strive for a culture of lifelong learning for all. A place where all staff members feel they can Grow Flourish and Succeed in their own ambitions.
1.2 We recognise that, as professionals, all staff will seek to constantly improve and develop the quality of their teaching and learning for the benefit of the learners in their care.
1.3 We aim to promote a culture of support and development for teachers that is built on trust and positive relationships.

At GFS we know that high quality teaching and learning is key to pupil progress. Learning observations provide a chance to:

- celebrate pupil achievement
- develop teachers' pedagogy
- recognise and share good practice
- identify areas for improvement that can inform professional development
- foster a climate of professional reflection and dialogue
- provide regular ongoing feedback to teachers and leaders
- identify trends in teaching and learning approaches across the school.
- allow leaders and the Local Advisory Board to know their school and the quality of teaching within it

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 It is the role of those who hold a leadership position in the school to collectively support in the actioning of this policy, namely; Middle Leaders, Extended Leaders, Associate and Senior Leaders.

2.2 Senior Assistant Principal, supported by member of the teaching and learning team in each area of the school are responsible for quality assurance of the process and utilising the information that the learning observation process generate.

2.3 Heads of Department/Faculty (Secondary), Curriculum Leaders (Primary), Assistant Head Teachers (whole school) and Heads of Year (Primary) are responsible for planning and actioning subject specific learning walks in response to trends in:

- Developmental drop ins
- Student academic data
- Wellbeing data

2.2 Leaders will have a given number of teachers to work with on through the GFS Coaching Cycle across the year. The number of teachers assigned to a leader will be relative to their capacity and duties held. There will be equity across the leadership bands.

2.3 Information gathered in learning observations and reflective conversations should be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. If best practice is to be shared this should be done with the permission of the teachers.

2.4 SLT and named members of ASLT are responsible for providing adequate training for MLT/ELT and ASLT to fulfil their duties. This training will be ongoing and based around the following themes:

- Vision and values of the learning observation process
- Developmental questioning
- The domains of foci
- Conducting learning walks

2.5 Teachers should feel involved and supported throughout the observation process.

3. Categories of Observation

3.1 At GFS, we use six types of observations. This document sets out the purpose and actions regarding each;

- Instructional Coaching referred to in section 4
- Subject specific learning walks – referred to in section 5
- Early Career Teacher Observations (Learning Walks and Observations) – referred to in section 6
- KHDA Rubric Observations – referred to in section 7
- Peer drop ins – referred to in section 8
- Gallery Lesson – referred to in section 9
- Steplab Drop Ins – referred to in section 10

4. Instructional Coaching

Purpose These observations are to be focused on developing the practice happening in the classroom and provide the basis for a reflective conversation of practice leading to.

4.1 Overview

Steplab's instructional coaching model focuses on improving teaching through regular cycles of observation and feedback. Coaches observe teachers for about 15minutes to identify areas for improvement. Feedback sessions last around 30minutes, where coaches praise progress, agree on the next steps, and model effective practices. Teachers then rehearse these steps, receiving balanced feedback to refine their techniques. This approach emphasises small, personalised changes that accumulate over time, helping teachers achieve broader teaching goals. Steplab's method is designed to be time-efficient and impactful, fostering continuous professional development for educators

4.2 Frequency and Duration

4.2.1 The cycle begins with a focused coaching observation on a 15–20 minute focus area of no longer than 15 minutes

4.2.2 This will be followed up by a coaching and rehearsal session of 20-30 minutes. In this session mutually agreed actions will be identified for the teacher to continue practising.

4.2.3 Follow up observations to review progress should follow the same process as 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. these can be arranged at mutually convenient time, as necessary. There is no requirement to wait for a new coaching cycle to begin. These will reflect as additional coaching cycles on the Steplab .platform

4.2.4 A minimum of 1 cycle per half term should be completed teachers on a regular coaching cycle.

4.2 Recording and Feedback

4.2.1 Commentary, praise and reflective questions by the observer will be collated on the Steplab platform

4.2.2 At a mutually convenient time, as close to the observation as possible, verbal feedback should be provided face to face

4.2.3 This should be a collaborative, constructive and supportive conversation that promotes purposeful growth in an identified area of practice.

4.2.4 Refer to Appendix B for more detailed guidance

4.2.5 Exemplary practice observed should be praised publicly using the Shoutout function on steplab

5. Subject Specific Learning Walks

5.1 In response to key trends or student data analysis, leaders may identify a thread of interest that requires further inquiry.

5.2 These learning walks will provide a snapshot of an element of teaching across a department or whole school.

5.3 These will be recorded on the Bluesky platform using the form 'GFS Learning Walks'

5.4 If as part of a learning walk a safeguarding or teaching and learning concern is identified, this will be communicated with the teacher observed, their line manager or escalated through Guard to the DSL, where appropriate. This person can be notified by selecting their name in the 'with' drop down menu on Bluesky.

5.5 Leaders will be expected to share a summary of findings and next steps at leadership meetings.

6. KHDA Rubric Observations

6.1 To provide comparative quality assurance to similar schools in Dubai and the DSIB framework, these observations are linked to specific parameters will be carried out by ASLT/SLT three time per year as part of a three times a year GFS Holistic Review.

6.2 This observation will be no less than 30 minutes and no longer than a full teaching period.

6.3 The parameters observed during these observations are:

- 1.2 Progress in lessons
- 1.3 Learning Skills
- 3.1 Teaching for effective Learning
- 3.2 Assessment

6.4 The capture of information will be on the Bluesky Platform. This information will used to inform leaders of overall quality of teaching and learning in lie with KHDA expectations

6.5 Teachers will receive praise and feedback via a Step lab drop in. Exemplary practice will be share publicy via Steplab Shoutouts

7. Lesson Observations for Early Career Teachers

7.1 This is applicable only to those who are Early Career Teachers (with QTS) completing their Department for Education mandatory induction.

7.2 Early Career Teachers will have 6 x full lesson observations across an academic year through the duration of their induction period. These will be prearranged, in line with Department for Education (England) requirements.

7.3 These will be carried out by assigned induction tutors or other appropriate leader and linked to the Department for Education (DfE) teacher standards.

7.4 Commentary should be both developmental and evaluative to inform and assist ECTs in identify their strengths and areas to develop in their early practice

7.5 In addition to this, mentors will visit lessons to provide further developmental dialogue, to be captured in the ECT Learning Walks form on Bluesky.

8. Peer Drop Ins

8.1 At GFS we have an open-door policy where teachers are encouraged to observe one another to gather and share best practice

8.2 Peer Drops ins should be part of the cycle of professional development and an action from reflective or coaching conversations. When it is decided during a coaching conversation that a drop in to another teacher is a suitable next step it should be recorded as such and the impact followed up in the next cycle of coaching.

8.3 These should be regular and last no longer than 20 minutes.

8.3 Peer drop ins must pre-arranged at least 24 hours ahead of time between teachers at a mutually convenient time and the focus must be agreed upon by both parties.

8.4 Teachers are encouraged to use the shoutout function on Steplab to publicly praise the teacher they have been to see and share best practice for others to larn from.

9. Gallery Lesson

9.1 At GFS opportunities for teacher to see best practice of teaching strategies in classrooms will be provided.

9.2 ASLT will identify individuals who are secure in a specific skillset to demonstrate live to a group of visiting teachers.

9.3 Gallery Lessons will be advertised for teachers to sign up to. A predetermined strategy or skill will be the focus of the session. Teachers should select the gallery lessons demonstrating the skills or areas of development identified from the Teach like a GEM Playbook, or an alternative effective strategy required to be improved as identified by teaching and learning data.

10. TLAG Drop Ins

10.1 These are a far as possible unnancouced drops in, conducted by leaders.
10.2 The drop in should be between 5-10 minutes in duration
10.3 The focus of a drop in will relate to a micro step of the the school 'Global Goal of the Week', from the Teach like a GEM Playbook.
10.4 These will be fortnightly inline witht he cycles of Teach like a GEM practice clinic professional learning sessions.
10.5 More details can be found in Appendic C.

11. Identifying and Supporting Underperformance

11.1 Underperformance of a teacher is defined as the failure to meet the established standards of the GFS, as evidenced by one or more of the following: KHDA Rubric lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutinies, and records of professional conduct. When a teacher is identified as being 'at risk' or has demonstrated sustained underperformance, a structured process of escalation will commence (see Appendix D).

11.2 This process begins with an enhanced coaching cycle (2 weeks per cycle) aimed at providing support and intervention. This will be recorded on Steplab Should there be limited or no improvement through these enhanced coaching cycles (maximum duration of 6 weeks), the next step in the escalation process will be enacted. This involves issuing a formal warning and initiating a Human Resources recorded Performance Improvement Plan.

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Senior Assistant Principal/Induction Coordinator

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Whole School Vice Principal

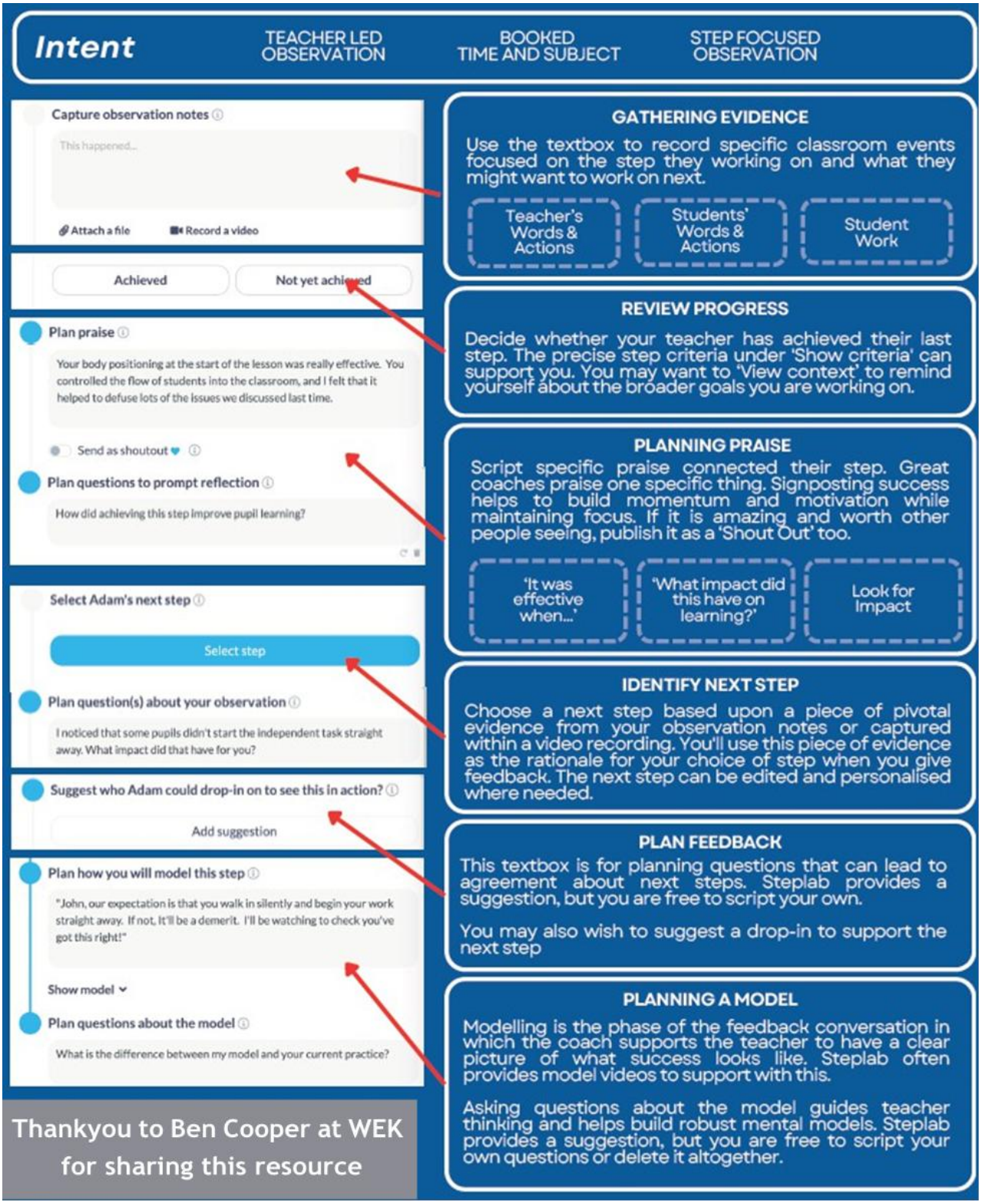
Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date ..... 22 August 2025.....
Executive Principal/CEO/Executive Vice President of Education

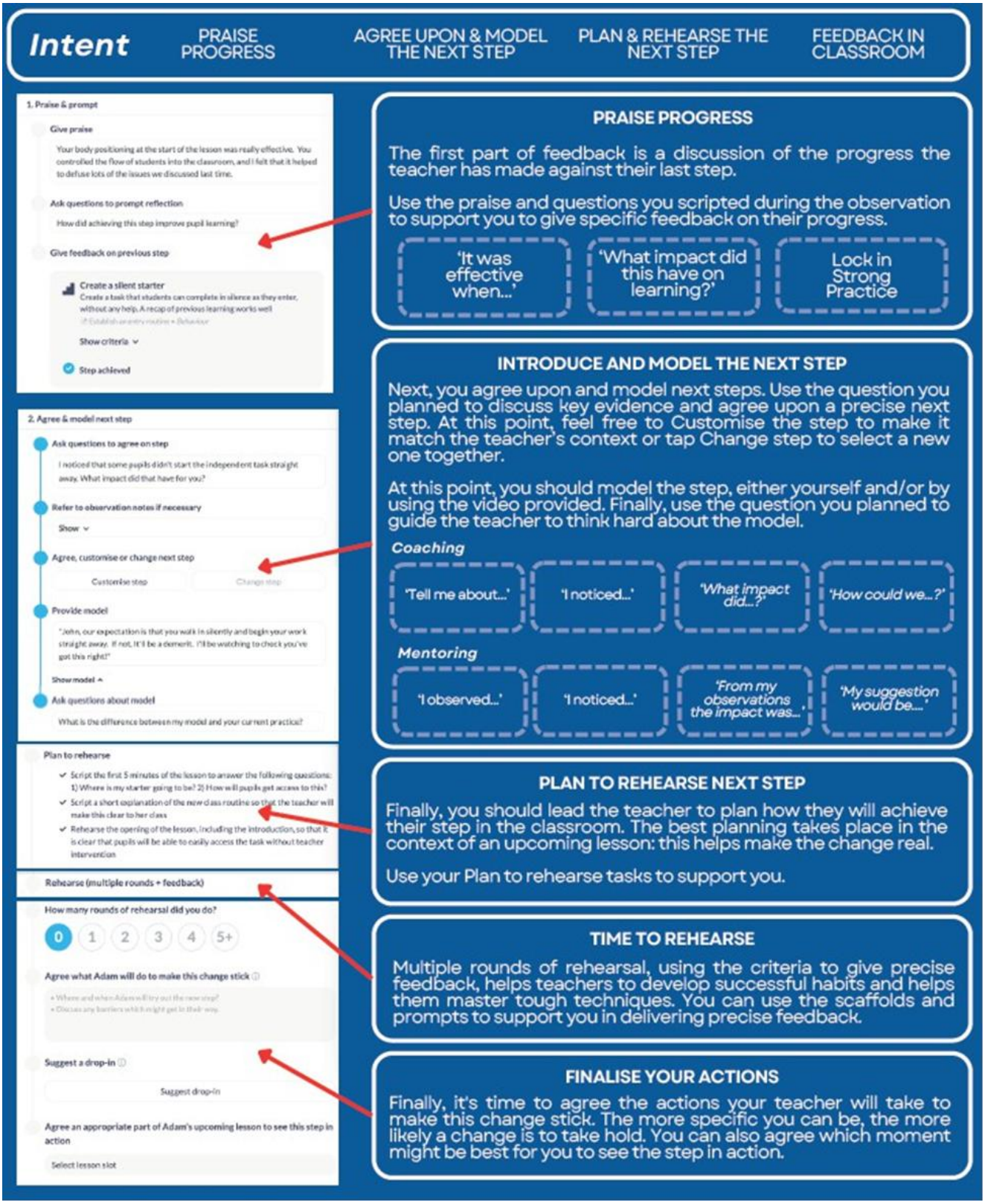
Next policy review date:
February 2026

Appendix A

Instructional Coaching Observations

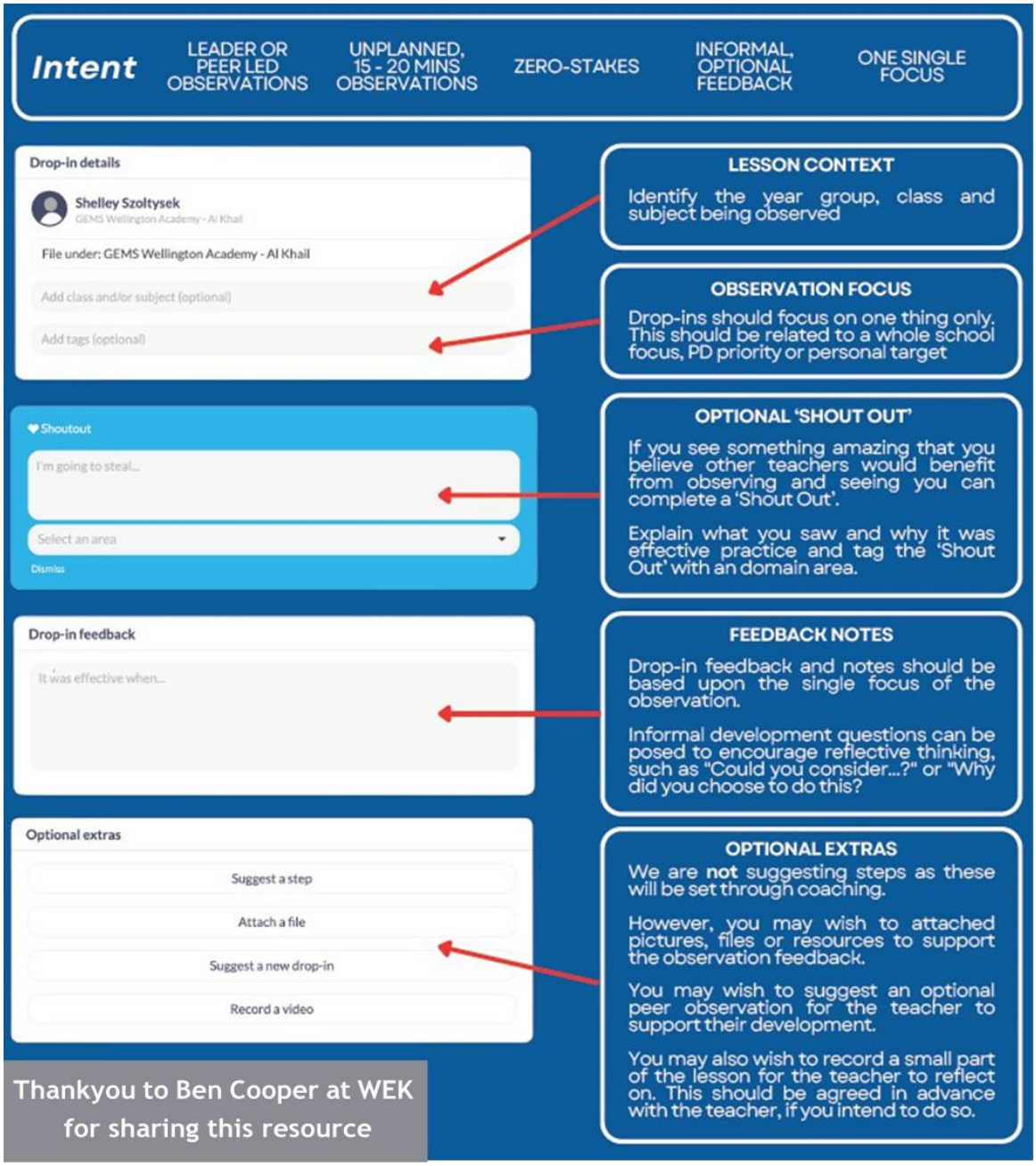
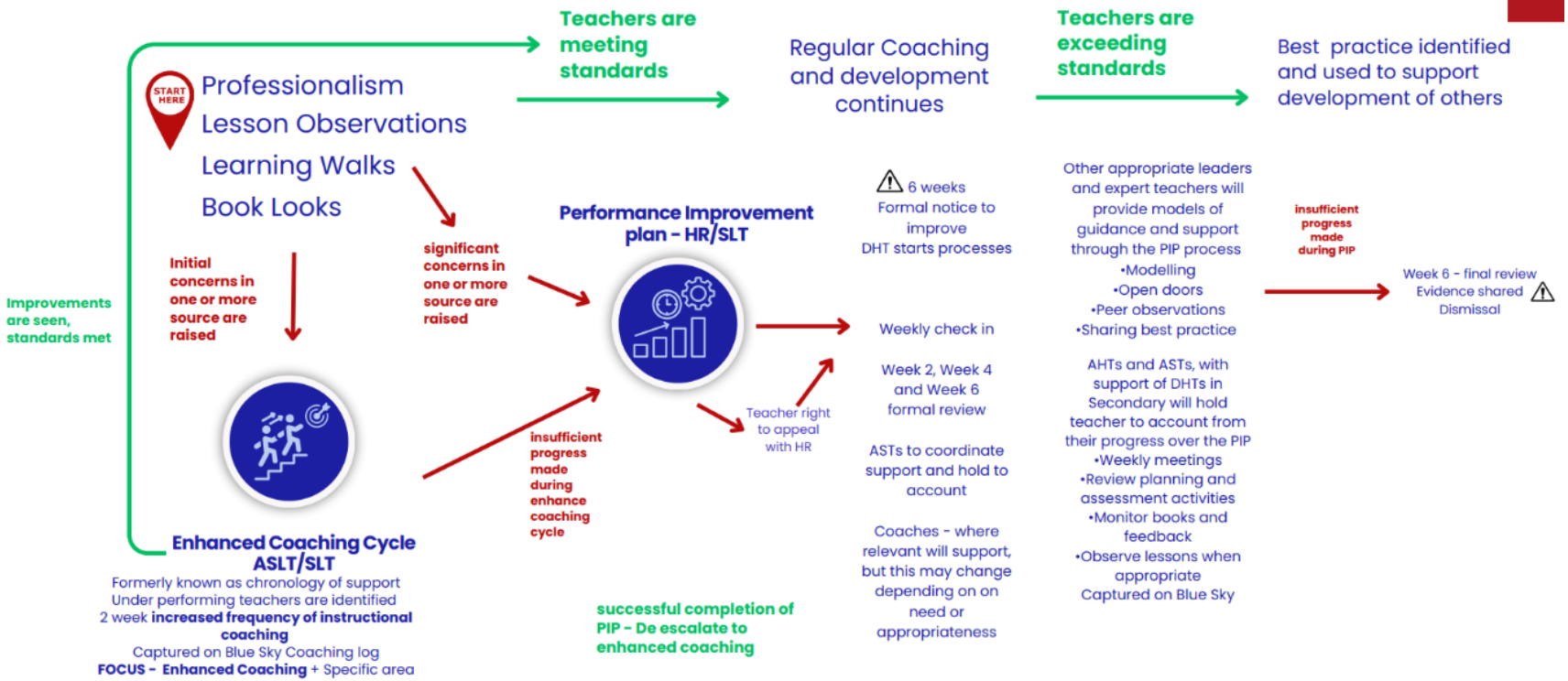


Instructional Coaching Feedback



Thankyou to Ben Cooper at WEK for sharing this resource

Appendix C


Intent
LEADER OR PEER LED OBSERVATIONS
UNPLANNED, 15 - 20 MINS OBSERVATIONS
ZERO-STAKES
INFORMAL, OPTIONAL FEEDBACK
ONE SINGLE FOCUS
Drop-in details
Shelley Szoltysek
GEMS Wellington Academy - Al Khail
File under: GEMS Wellington Academy - Al Khail
Add class and/or subject (optional)
Add tags (optional)
Shoutout
I'm going to steal...
Select an area
Dismiss
Drop-in feedback
It was effective when...
Optional extras
Suggest a step
Attach a file
Suggest a new drop-in
Record a video
LESSON CONTEXT
Identify the year group, class and subject being observed
OBSERVATION FOCUS
Drop-ins should focus on one thing only. This should be related to a whole school focus, PD priority or personal target
OPTIONAL 'SHOUT OUT'
If you see something amazing that you believe other teachers would benefit from observing and seeing you can complete a 'Shout Out'.
Explain what you saw and why it was effective practice and tag the 'Shout Out' with an domain area.
FEEDBACK NOTES
Drop-in feedback and notes should be based upon the single focus of the observation.
Informal development questions can be posed to encourage reflective thinking, such as "Could you consider...?" or "Why did you choose to do this?
OPTIONAL EXTRAS
We are not suggesting steps as these will be set through coaching.
However, you may wish to attached pictures, files or resources to support the observation feedback.
You may wish to suggest an optional peer observation for the teacher to support their development.
You may also wish to record a small part of the lesson for the teacher to reflect on. This should be agreed in advance with the teacher, if you intend to do so.
Thankyou to Ben Cooper at WEK for sharing this resource

Teaching and Learning Escalations