



GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF PLANNED CLASSROOM VISITS

FINAL VERSION

Agreed at MNCT 18/08/26

1.1 This guidance replaces the 2005 Midlothian Council guidance “Guidelines on the use of planned Classroom Visits”. Approaches to professional learning and quality improvement have evolved since the 2005 guidance was published.

1.2 Schools have developed a range of approaches to support professional learning and quality improvement. These include

- Teacher learning communities, also known as teacher trios
- Learning walks
- Lesson study
- Pupil shadowing
- Collaborative practitioner enquiry etc
- Professional reading book clubs
- Excellence & equity meetings also known as attainment meetings
- Participation in local authority QI visits
- Curriculum review

It is important that quality improvement approaches, including planned classroom visits, are manageable within the time agreed for these and support professional reflection and improvement.

3. The above may include planned classroom visits where teachers, middle leaders, headteachers and/or the education central team can participate in professional dialogue to support improvement in learner outcomes. Learners themselves are involved in these approaches so that we fulfil our statutory duties to involve children and young people in decisions which affect them. For example, learners may be surveyed or be part of pupil leadership groups where school improvement is discussed.
4. These approaches are best decided at local level, in each school, because every school context is different (type of improvement required, level of support required etc) The approaches should be focussed on the improvement of outcomes for learners.
5. Headteachers should agree the approach to planned classroom visits with teachers. There should be no more than 2 planned, formal observations with individual feedback for each teacher. This does not preclude other QI activity above if agreed locally. This should be part of the decision-making around the school's improvement plan and local working time

agreement. Any disagreements about planned classroom visits should be resolved in the usual ways. These include

- Further school leader and staff discussion with the aim of reaching an agreement.
 - Existing resolution arrangements for Local Working Time Agreements, contained in LWTA guidance.
6. Headteachers should be sensitive to individual staff context (e.g. NQTs, staff recently returning from absence) when planning classroom visits.
 7. Competency or disciplinary processes are covered as part of separate policies and should not be part of planned classroom visits. However, competency and disciplinary processes may also require planned classroom visits, for example, as part of fact finding.
 8. Learning visits should be proportionate in any school year and aligned to the Midlothian Quality Improvement Framework which is agreed with trade unions and school leaders. The QIF is available on the [Midlothian Education Service QI website](#).
 9. Headteachers should agree with teachers whether individual or whole-school feedback will be used following planned classroom visits. This will depend on the purpose of the feedback. Individual feedback, is generally used to address inconsistency in agreed school approaches. Whole-school feedback, is generally used to stimulate professional dialogue about strengths, areas for development and next steps for a whole school or department. There are suggested scripts for feedback that can be agreed with school teams, on the QI website.

Policy approved at MNCT meeting on 18/08/2026

Signatures of co-chairs

Name of MNCT Joint Chair	MICHELLE STONG	Signature of Joint Chair	
Name of MNCT Joint Chair	PHILIP ALAN WOOD	Signature of Joint Chair	