

Our guide to

# Observations vs Awards & Activities

Teachers now have two powerful tools to support pupil progress and motivation. While they work well together, each serves a different purpose.

## Observations of Pupil Learning

### Purpose

To record and evidence learning in action.

### What they are

Short records (notes, photos, assessment comments) showing how pupils learn, engage, and achieve in the classroom.

### Why they matter

- Provide a rich, accurate picture of pupil progress.
- Help identify strengths, gaps and next steps.
- Build a reliable bank of evidence for assessment, reports and moderation.
- Support meaningful conversations with parents around learning, progress and next steps.

### Example

A photo of a group science experiment with notes on how a pupil applied problem-solving skills.

## Awards & Activities

### Purpose

To recognise, motivate, and celebrate positive behaviours and achievements.

### What they are

Quick acknowledgements given to pupils for meeting expectations, showing effort, or demonstrating school values. Activities can also be linked for engagement and fun.

### Why they matter

- Encourage positive behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Create a culture of recognition and celebration.
- Motivate pupils through consistent, fair rewards.
- Build pupil confidence and enthusiasm for school life.

### Example

Awarding a pupil for showing resilience in Maths, or for consistently helping others.

## How they work together

- ❖ Observations give the **evidence** of learning.
- ❖ Awards & Activities give the **recognition** that motivates pupils to keep going.
- ❖ Used together, they create a cycle of **progress** and **celebration**

