

Appraisal Policy



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Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers and non-teaching staff, including the principal, and for supporting their development within the context of the school's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of school staff. It also sets out the arrangements that will apply when staff fall below the levels of competence that are expected of them.

Appraisal in schools across the trust will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all staff have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that staff are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop within their role. Appraisal will also encourage staff to engage in research-informed practice that is shared across the school community, the trust and beyond.

The appraisal period

The appraisal period will run for twelve months from the Autumn term for all staff. Staff who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract.

There is flexibility to have a longer or shorter appraisal period when teachers begin or end employment with the school or when teachers change post within the Trust.

Appointing appraisers

The principal in each school will be appraised by the trustees, supported by a

suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Trust Board for that purpose. The task of appraising the principal, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to the principal review group, consisting of three members of the Trust Board.

The principal will decide who will appraise other teachers, appraisers must hold QTS. Team leaders will operate as appraisers for non-teaching staff and do not need to hold QTS.

Setting objectives

The principal's objectives will be set by the Trust Board after consultation with the external adviser.

Objectives for each teacher will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set for each member of staff, will be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound and will be appropriate to the teacher's role and level of experience. The appraiser and staff member will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change and will be limited to three. At least one objective for each staff member will have a research-based focus and staff are encouraged to consider how their research findings can be shared across the school community, the Trust or wider.

Objectives are recorded on Bluesky in agreement between the appraiser and appraisee. It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure they actively record evidence against each target throughout the appraisal period and maintain a dialogue with their appraiser, especially when they feel their appraisal target is at risk of not being met.

The objectives set for each staff member will, if achieved, contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school. This will be ensured by the principal quality assuring each appraisal review statement objectives against the school improvement plan.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each staff member will be informed of the standards against which that performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. Teachers with QTS are assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards" published in July 2011. Teachers will also be assessed in line with the school's pay progression document for teacher, advanced teacher and expert teacher as outlined in the school Pay Policy.

Reviewing performance

Observation

The trust uses a system of marshalling appraisal evidence to ascertain the performance of a teacher or staff member. Marshalling takes in a range of observation tools to

measure the quality of performance. For teachers, this may include progress of work in books, progress data and the quality of teaching, lesson review outcomes, research outcomes and governing body monitoring outcomes.

The performance of teachers and teaching assistants will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the staff member and the overall needs of the school.

In addition to formal observation, the principal or other leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may “drop in” in order to evaluate the standards of teaching and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of “drop in” observations will vary depending on specific circumstances however 3 day’s notice of any observation or drop in of over 10 minutes in length will be given. Outcomes of ‘drop ins’ will be discussed at the school marshalling meeting to form a global picture of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment formally.

Staff who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

Review Meeting

There are two review meetings during the appraisal cycle, one mid-year and one at the end of the cycle. The mid year review reflects on the progress made towards completion of the targets set and will allow the appraisee to reflect on progress made with their appraiser. The final review will reflect on the outcomes of their targets, the wider impact of their role and will affirm the appraisee has maintained the relevant standard relating to their job role. The appraisee will complete an initial review of their own targets prior to the appraisal review meeting and is responsible for ensuring any relevant evidence has been uploaded to Bluesky. The appraiser will then discuss future targets for the forthcoming year with their appraisee and support them in formulating challenging and engaging targets for the forthcoming appraisal cycle.

It is the appraisee’s responsibility to ensure that the relevant documentation is available to enable the appraiser to undertake a full and fair review of the appraisee’s performance and contribution.

As part of the appraisal process, the appraiser should encourage the appraisee to undertake a thorough self-review/self-evaluation in order to prepare for the appraisal review meeting. This is recorded on BlueSky in the review statement section of each target set.

The self-review enables the appraisee to reflect upon their overall performance during the appraisal cycle and to review their performance in respect of the specific objectives set. The appraisee is able to collect evidence of their performance to support the assessment of their performance, and is able to bring to the attention of the appraiser any supporting evidence to enable the appraiser to make a comprehensive and objective assessment of the appraisee’s performance.

Examples of such supporting evidence from the appraisee could be:

- Notes from line management meetings/mid year reviews
- CPD/Training records
- External feedback that supports performance assessment
- Portfolio of work
- Formal observation of tasks where appropriate
- Completed self-review document
- Direct evidence to support performance of appraisee in respect to the Appraisal objectives eg. data, records

Where practical, evidence should be stored in BlueSky to enable the appraiser to track the evidence presented by the appraisee throughout the year.

The basis for the appraisal review will be 'overall performance' and the criteria to be used must have been specified by the appraiser at the previous planning and review meeting. The criteria for assessment will be recorded in the BlueSky record for each objective set.

When assessing overall performance, appraisers should consider how challenging the objectives have been. Good progress towards the achievement of a challenging objective, even if the performance criteria have not been met in full, will be assessed favourably.

Appraisees will not be held accountable if objectives have not been fully met for reasons outside the appraisee's control.

If an appraisee is absent for a significant part of the cycle the appraiser should consider what was reasonable to achieve during the time when the appraisee was present. If the appraisee is eligible for pay progression then the appraiser will be required to make a recommendation on the basis of the assessment of performance throughout the cycle against the performance criteria specified in the statement. The criteria used must be consistent with any nationally determined requirements and this is clearly stated in the academy's pay policy. The principal will act as pay reviewer and will make a judgement based on each appraisal statement presented.

Changes to the appraisal objectives in mid-cycle

There may be occasions when it is necessary to amend or change the content of the planning and review statement because of changes in the appraisee's circumstances. In this event either party can request a revision meeting to discuss the changes needed. The appraisee and appraiser should sign to say that the changes are an accurate reflection of what was agreed or determined by the appraiser.

If there is no agreement to the proposed changes then the appraiser shall amend the statement with any changes he/she thinks ought to be made and pass the

revised statement to the appraisee who may add his/her comments.

Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all staff take responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual staff.

Feedback

Staff will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation (within 24 hours) has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need attention. Non-teaching staff or those without QTS will be provided with feedback relevant to their targets by their line manager, evidence for this may be gathered through other means such as discussion with the staff member or monitoring the quality of work. Where there are concerns about any aspects of the staff member's performance the appraiser will meet the them formally to:

- give clear feedback to the member of staff about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the member of staff the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- agree any support (eg coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress (it may be appropriate to revise objectives, and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time is up to the school but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns);
- explain the implications and process if no – or insufficient – improvement is made.

When progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the member of staff has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.

Transition to capability

If the appraiser feels the appraisee is not making adequate progress a discussion will be held to outline the initial concerns and offer support in making further progress towards their targets. If the appraiser remains dissatisfied with progress, the staff member will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure, and will be invited to a formal capability meeting. The capability procedures will be conducted as in the trust's Capability Policy.

Annual assessment

Each member of staff's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the principal, the trustees will consult the external adviser / CEO.

This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in an interim meeting which will take place at least once in each appraisal period.

The staff member will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment in writing on - a written appraisal report. In trust schools, teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 October (31 December for the principal or staff paid on the leadership scale). Non-teaching staff will receive their appraisal report by 31st December. The appraisal report will include:

- details of the objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards;
- an assessment of the professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- a recommendation on pay where that is relevant (NB – pay recommendations need to be made by 31 December for senior staff on the leadership range and by 31 October for teachers and non-teaching staff);
- an opportunity for the staff member to record their own comments

The assessment of performance and of professional development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

Appeal

If a staff member feels that a decision or action made during the appraisal process is wrong or unjust, they may appeal in writing against the decision within five days of the decision, setting out at the same time the grounds for appeal. Appeals will be heard without unreasonable delay, ideally within fifteen working days from the lodged appeal and, where possible, at an agreed time and place. The same arrangements for notification and right to be accompanied by a companion will apply as with formal capability and review meetings and, as with other formal meetings, notes will be taken and a copy sent to the teacher.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially and, wherever possible, by managers or governors who have not previously been involved in the case.

The staff member will be informed in writing of the results of the appeal hearing as soon as possible.

General Principles Underlying This policy

ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Part B of the policy will be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the ACAS Code of Practice.

Confidentiality

The appraisal processes will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the principal and trust board to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system. The principal will quality assure every review statement and will make a pay decision based on the review. The trust board will quality assure this process to ensure decisions are made consistently and fairly and that confidentiality is maintained in the appraisal process.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The trust board is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness. It will abide by all relevant equality legislation, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled teachers. The trust board is aware of the guidance on the Equality Act issued by the Department for Education.

Definitions

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “teacher” include the headteacher / principal / Head of School / Assistant Head of School.

Delegation

Normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by governing bodies, headteachers and trust boards.

Sickness

If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s absence policy and will be referred to the occupational health service to assess the member of staff’s health and fitness for continued employment and the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with monitoring or appraisal procedures. In some cases, it may be appropriate for monitoring and/or appraisal procedures to continue during a period of sickness absence. However, the views of the occupational health physician will always be taken into account before a decision is reached.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The trust board, CEO and school principals will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school’s appraisal arrangements.

Retention

The trust board and principal will ensure that all written appraisal records are

retained securely for six years and then destroyed.