

Appraisal policy – school based staff



AGORA
LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all school based staff, and for supporting their development within the context of each school's plan for improving educational provision and the standards expected.

This policy applies to all school staff employed by the Trust, except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction, and those who are subject to a formal capability process.

2. The appraisal period

The appraisal period for all staff will run for twelve months from 1 September to 31 August.

Employees 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.

Newly appointed staff will have their performance managed in accordance with the Trust's Probation Policy for the first 26 weeks of their employment.

3. Appointing appraisers

Across the Trust the task of appraising headteachers, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to the Chair of each Academy Governing Board supported by the CEO/Academy Improvement Lead (AIL) on behalf of the Trust.

The headteacher of each school setting will decide who will appraise other employees.

4. Setting objectives

Objectives for each employee will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The appraiser and employee will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives and the employee may record their comments in writing as an appendix to the appraisal statement. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

Objectives will often be annual in duration but there is no requirement for them to be. Where appropriate, objectives covering a shorter period, such as a term may be set and be replaced on conclusion with another objective relevant to the following term.

The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to each school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils. This will be ensured by quality assuring all objectives against the school improvement plan.

Some roles have national standards that employees fulfilling those roles will be expected to consistently meet. These will be considered as part of the review process and must be deemed to have been met for a cycle to be successful.

Under normal circumstances employees will have a reasonable number of objectives that is relative to the role that they undertake. This will usually be between 3 and 5 objectives. However, employees who are found not to be meeting standards at the appropriate level may be given as many additional objectives as are required to ensure that the most appropriate support can be provided. Those with leadership and management responsibilities are likely to be given more objectives relative to colleagues that do not.

5. Reviewing performance

5.1. Observation

This Trust believes that observation of classroom, leadership and work practice and other responsibilities is important both as a way of assessing teachers' performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have and of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally. All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion. For non-teaching staff work scrutiny will be carried out by those with knowledge of the employee's work as far as reasonably practicable.

Classroom observation will be carried out by those with QTS. Where non-teaching staff are delivering lessons, for cover or supervision purposes for example, lesson observations may be necessary to assess objectives where relevant.

In addition to formal observation, school and Trust 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.

Teachers (including school leaders) who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

The amount of observation that takes place will not normally exceed 3 hours of formal observation in a particular appraisal cycle. Formal observation will usually be with prior notification, most likely agreed as part of objective setting.

Additional formal observation may be deemed necessary in circumstances where concerns arise where it is felt appropriate to facilitate and monitor the effectiveness of management support. This would usually be explained at the time concerns are raised with an employee.

Formal observation outlined above excludes school reviews, Ofsted visits, learning walks with a specific focus e.g. pupil premium provision or a department review. The areas excluded cover circumstances where it is a whole school or department focus rather than an individual focus.

Informal drop in observations and wider school or department reviews will not result in formal outcomes being given. These are not documented for an individual employee and do not form part of a measure against an employee's annual

appraisal. Anything identified as an issue outside of formal observation will be revisited in accordance with this policy and the capability policy as appropriate.

5.2. Development and support

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

5.3. Feedback

Employees will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation 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. Where there are concerns about any aspects of the employees' performance the appraiser will meet the employee formally to:

- give clear feedback to the employee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns
- give the employee the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns
- agree any support (e.g. 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
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made

When progress is reviewed, if the appraiser is satisfied that the employee 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.

5.4 Headteachers

This section also applies to the headteacher in each setting however appraisal will be managed by the Headteacher Performance Review Panel, made up of the Chair of the Academy Governing Board and the CEO/Academy Improvement Lead (AIL).

Headteachers should expect one target that has a cross multi academy trust focus that will support the development of both their own school and others in the Trust.

6. Transition to capability

If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, the employee 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 in accordance with the Trust's Capability Policy.

7. Annual assessment

Each employee's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period.

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 by means of:

- professional dialogue
- lesson or task observations
- planning and work scrutiny
- termly meetings with appraiser
- mid-cycle review meeting with appraiser
- observation / scrutiny of leadership and management activities where appropriate
- other feedback obtained during the cycle relevant to the employee's overall performance

The employee will receive a written appraisal report as soon as reasonably practicable, following the end of each appraisal period. They will be afforded the opportunity to comment in writing on the appraisal.

The appraisal report will include:

- details of the employee's objectives for the appraisal period in question
- an assessment of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards
- an assessment of the employee's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them
- a recommendation on pay, where that is relevant and in keeping with the schools' Pay Policy, and relevant terms and conditions of employment

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

Recommendations on pay will be referred to the headteacher before being submitted to the Academy Governing Board for consideration.

Where there is disagreement as to performance related indicator (PRI) ratings, appraisal review outcomes, or performance related pay (PRP) outcomes, the matter will be referred to the school leader with delegated responsibility for the process, who will meet with the appraisee, consider all available evidence, and inform them of their decision.

Disputes concerning pay arising from the appraisal process will be dealt with through the appeal process set out in the Trust's Pay Policy.

8. Confidentiality

The appraisal processes will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the headteacher and Academy Governing Board to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

9. 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. Quality assurance will consider consistency in objectives set, their review and pay recommendations arising.

The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for the quality assurance of the appraisal process across the school.

10. Definitions

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “teacher” include leadership posts.

11. Delegation

Normal rules apply in respect of the delegation of functions by the Trust, Academy Governing Boards and school leaders.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

The Trust, Academy Governing Boards and school leaders will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school’s appraisal arrangements, as appropriate and in line with the Trust’s Scheme of Delegation.

13. Retention

The Trust, Academy Governing Boards and school leaders will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed.