

Policy for appraising teacher performance

The Trustee Board of Abingdon Learning Trust adopted this policy on **26th June 2025**. It will be reviewed in 3 years.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Appraisal Policy Framework (for all staff), the Principles into Practice (Teachers) and the Professional Learning Strategy (Teachers) documents, and links to the Pay Policy.

NOTE: THERE IS NO LONGER A LINK BETWEEN PAY AND APPRAISAL

Purpose of appraisal

Appraisal is a process that should motivate and enthuse teachers to seek out opportunities for increasing their professional effectiveness.

At least three meetings per year should take place with their line manager to discuss progress, career aspirations and professional development.

These discussions are underpinned by an open and accessible series of CPD opportunities, for example, in-person and on-line courses; peer observation and feedback; NPQs; work shadowing and exchange; visits to other schools/providers; individual or group action research; attendance/presentation at the Trust's Staff Conference.

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, including school leaders, and for supporting their development within the context of the Trust' and school's plans for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers.

Application of the policy

The policy covers appraisal, applies to all teachers (both QTS, QTLS and those contracted on the Unqualified Teachers Pay Range) and school leaders employed by the Trust except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (i.e. ECTs), and those who are subject to capability procedures.

The policy should always be applied in a way that is robust whilst minimising the impact on workload for teachers, line managers, school leaders, governors and trustees.

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Appraisal

Appraisal in this Trust will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers have or fully develop the skills, and have the professional knowledge and understanding they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that teachers are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop as teachers.

The appraisal period

The appraisal period will run for twelve months from 1 September to 31 August (the academic year). Teachers 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 and an individual teacher's objectives should take account of the length of contract.

There is flexibility to have a longer or shorter appraisal period when teachers begin or end employment with a school.

Appointing appraisers

The headteacher of a school will be appraised by two members of the Local Academy Committee (LAC), one of whom will be the Chair of the LAC, and either the CEO or Director of Education (the Headteacher appraisal panel).

The school leader will decide who will appraise other teachers.

Setting objectives

The headteacher's objectives will be set by the Headteacher appraisal panel. The LAC and trust executive have a duty to have regard to the work-life balance of the school leader and objectives will reflect this.

Objectives for each teacher will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The school leader has a duty to have regard to the work-life balance of the teacher and objectives will reflect this.

The objectives set for each teacher will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the teacher's role and level of experience.

Objectives and appraisal discussions will not be based on teacher-generated data and predictions, or solely on the assessment data for a single group of pupils. The appraiser and teacher will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. The appraisee can record their disagreement on the appraisal statement and this will be taken into account at the appraisal review.

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Objectives should be revised if circumstances change, such as but not limited to a teacher going on maternity leave, or undergoing surgery/medical treatment, to take account of the anticipated absence and to allow the teacher to meet reduced and attainable targets.

The objectives set for each teacher 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.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each teacher will be informed of the standards against which that teacher's performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. All teachers must be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards" published in July 2011. This assessment will support the identification of teacher appraisal objectives.

Objectives should have a strong focus on effective professional development to ensure that teachers stay up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies, and educational research, to enable them to become increasingly effective in their role.

Teachers' performance is assessed against their objectives, and the relevant standards. The appraiser will need to set out what they will take into account when making judgements as to whether teachers have met their objectives and the relevant standards. Evidence used in the performance management process must relate directly to objectives and should be agreed in advance and be readily available from day-to-day practice.

This might but does not have to include:

- improvements in specific elements of practice, such as behaviour management, development of pedagogy or providing feedback
- impact on effectiveness of teachers or other staff
- wider contribution to the work of the school.

Reviewing performance

Each school will set out what evidence they will take into account when making judgements about a teachers' performance and whether they have met the relevant 14 standards and their individual objectives. This evidence will be decided upon when the objectives are being set at the beginning of the appraisal process.

This Trust believes that a range of different methods should be utilised, in a supportive fashion, to assess teachers' performance. It is important to our Trust that methods of assessing teacher performance do not add to teacher workload.

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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 teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development.

Professional development will be linked to trust and school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers, and their career aspirations.

Feedback

Teachers 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. The school's regular QA processes will be the majority source of evidence, ensuring that appraisal-related workload is minimised. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development.

Assessment against Teachers' Standards

Teachers' performance will be assessed against the relevant teacher standards to a level that is consistent with what should reasonably be expected of a teacher in the relevant role and at the relevant stage of their career. School leaders and other appraisers should use their professional judgement when appraising teachers' performance.

Informal Support

Except in the most serious cases of persistent failures to meet job expectations and teaching standards, resulting in negative consequences on the pupils and organisation, teachers should not ordinarily be placed in capability procedures without first undergoing a period of informal support as part of the appraisal process.

Where there are concerns about any aspects of the teacher's performance the appraiser will meet the teacher to:

- inform the teacher that they are going to be receiving informal support due to performance concerns
- give clear and specific feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns
- give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns
- set clear objectives and timescales for required improvement
- agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns

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- 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) and is unlikely to be more than 10 weeks
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made – e.g. commencement of capability procedure.

There should be a clear relationship between the issue, the objectives set, and the planned documented programme of support put in place.

The line manager/appraiser should partner with the teacher in a collaborative manner to establish objectives and timelines, taking into account the teacher's circumstances.

This may include any medical conditions, well-being support needs, or disabilities protected by equality legislation. Informal support should be provided for a reasonable period to allow for performance improvement. Schools could decide this is a minimum of 6 weeks.

However, the duration will be determined based on the specific circumstances, with appropriate support in place to facilitate improvement. The appraiser should meet with the teacher regularly to assess progress and ensure the agreed-upon support is being provided.

When progress is reviewed, after the agreed upon period, if the appraiser is satisfied that the teacher 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 a teacher demonstrates serious underperformance or has not responded to support provided within the informal support process, the teacher 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.

Advice should be sought as appropriate from the Central Team Head of HR; or from the CEO, for a headteacher.

Disciplinary procedures will only be triggered by factors related to misconduct or breach of professional standards. Schools should be careful not to conflate these procedures but, if appropriate to the circumstances, they can run concurrently.

Annual assessment

Each teacher's performance will be 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

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regular basis throughout the year in interim meetings which will take place at least once a term).

The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on – an appraisal report.

The appraisal report will include:

- details of the teacher's objectives for the appraisal period in question
- an assessment of the teacher's performance of their role and responsibilities against the relevant standards and their objectives
- an assessment of the teacher's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them
- details of a discussion on wellbeing and workload and career progression/aspirations

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

NOTES

Objective Setting

The nature and weighting of a teacher's objectives during appraisal should be non-discriminatory. Particular attention should be given to whether individual teachers may face barriers to the achievement of objectives that relate to a protected characteristic.

Training is provided for appraisers in this and moderation will take place to ensure there is fairness across teachers with similar roles and responsibilities.

Training for teachers is provided to ensure that the policy is understood and where relevant, be able to identify how this is being applied in their own situation.

An annual equality analysis will be undertaken.

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