

Appraisal Policy (Teaching)

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 school's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers.

This policy has been developed in accordance with The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 which apply to all maintained schools in England, including maintained special schools, and to local authorities in respect of centrally employed (or unattached) teachers.

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Where the headteacher is the employee concerned, any reference to the headteacher in this policy should be replaced with the chair of governors.

1 Introduction

Appraisal in this school will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers, and school leaders, have or fully develop the skills and access to support 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 school also wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development. The appraisal process is designed to ensure that teachers:

- have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively
- can continue to improve their professional practice and to develop and progress as teachers

The appraisal process will inform continuing professional development and will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of teachers, within the constraints of the school budget.

This policy applies to all teachers and school leaders employed by the school except for the following:

- those on contracts of less than one term
- those undergoing statutory induction (i.e. Early Career teachers)
- those who are subject to the Teacher Capability Policy

Teachers should receive constructive informal feedback on their performance and development areas throughout the appraisal period. Feedback should highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development.

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

1.1 Appraisal period

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

Teachers who are employed on a fixed term contract of at least one term but less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the appraisal period will be determined by the duration of their contract and an individual teacher's objectives should take account of the length of contract.

Where a teacher starts their employment at the school part way through an appraisal period, the length of the first period will need to be determined with a view to bringing this in line with other teachers as soon as possible.

Where an existing teacher transfers to a new post within the school part way through an appraisal period their objectives should be reviewed and amended where appropriate, and the school should decide whether the same appraiser continues for the remainder of the period.

1.2 Performance standards

Overall performance includes meeting performance objectives, meeting the Teachers Standards and effectively carrying out their job role and responsibilities. All teachers will be assessed against the Teachers' Standards, published by the Department for Education. A copy of the Teachers' Standards is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#).

In addition, Upper Pay Range teachers will be assessed to determine whether they are highly competent in all of the Teachers Standards and that their achievements and contribution to the school has been substantial and sustained.

Definitions within this school for 'highly competent', 'substantial' and 'sustained' are as follows:

- **Highly competent** means: the teacher's performance is assessed as having excellent depth and breadth of knowledge, skill and understanding of the Teachers' Standards in their particular role and the context in which they are working and their teaching practice is assessed as at or exceeding school expectations.
- **Substantial** means: the teacher's achievements and contribution to the school are critical and significant, not just in raising standards of teaching and learning in their own classroom or with their own groups of children, but also in making a significant wider contribution to school improvement that impacts on pupil progress and the effectiveness of other staff. They are a role model for teaching and learning, provide effective coaching and mentoring to other teachers and take advantage of appropriate opportunities for professional development and use the outcomes effectively to improve pupils' learning and develop other staff.
- **Sustained** means: maintained continuously over a period of at least 2 school years and able to demonstrate that their teaching expertise has grown over the relevant period.

The governing body or headteacher, will also determine whether certain teachers should also be assessed against other sets of relevant standards, e.g. Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status. Teachers will be informed at the beginning of the appraisal period if they are to be assessed against any other relevant standards.

For headteachers the DfE 'Headteachers' Standards' 2020, can be used to inform the appraisal process. A copy of these standards is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#).

2 Appraisal meeting

Before the start of each appraisal period, or as soon as practicable after, an appraisal objective setting meeting will be held to set teacher's objectives and to assess the teacher's professional development needs, identifying any action that should be taken to address these needs.

Appraisal meetings will take place within a teacher's directed time and should not take place within Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.

There is no statutory right for teacher's to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at any meetings during the appraisal process.

2.1 Appointing appraisers

All appraisers, other than those appraising headteachers, will be qualified teachers. The headteacher will decide who will appraise teachers.

The headteacher will be appraised by the governing body, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser, e.g. School Leadership Advisers, who has been appointed by the governing body for that purpose. In this school, the task of appraising the headteacher will be delegated to a minimum of two performance management governors, determined by the governing body. The headteacher's objectives will be set by the performance management governors after consultation with the external adviser e.g. School Leadership Adviser.

Under the Collaboration Regulations, where a headteacher is temporarily responsible for more than one school, the governing bodies may arrange for a joint committee made up of governors from all the schools involved to be established to oversee the headteacher's performance management arrangements and other relevant staffing issues.

Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser will be absent for the majority of the appraisal period, another appropriate teacher may take on the appraiser role as determined by the headteacher (or by the chair of governors in respect of headteacher absence).

2.2 Setting objectives

The objectives set for each teacher, should be appropriate to the teacher's role, responsibilities and level of experience. They should be clearly defined, indicate what success may look like and should be SMART:

- **Specific** – objectives should state a desired outcome
- **Measurable** – the teacher should know when the objective has been achieved
- **Achievable** – must be something the teacher is capable of achieving
- **Relevant** – the objectives should be relevant to school priorities
- **Time-bound** – when does the objective have to be achieved

The number of objectives for each teacher should be reasonable, and this will normally be a maximum of three objectives.

Numerical targets should not be set if it is beyond the teacher's control to achieve them. Objectives should not be based on teacher generated data and/or predictions or based on data for

a single group of pupils, however objectives can be agreed in relation to robust assessment data if appropriate ('Making Data Work' report).

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. Objectives may take account of the following:

- Links to the school's plans and priorities for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school
- The school improvement plan and development planning
- School self-evaluation
- The scope and context of the particular role
- Any specific needs (e.g. for improvement) for the teacher
- The professional aspirations of the teacher where possible

Objectives should also have a strong focus on effective professional development to ensure that teachers stay up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies, and educational research.

The appraiser and teacher will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Appraisees may record their comments alongside objectives if required.

Teachers may wish to undertake a 'self-review' against the Teachers Standards and could bring evidence that is available from day to day practice to support their evaluation against the teachers standards. This can assist discussions regarding the Teachers Standards during the appraisal process and will ensure overall performance is assessed as well as performance against agreed objectives.

A template appraisal review statement is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#).

3 Evidence

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

A range of evidence will be used to assess a teacher's overall performance, which may include:

- Lesson observations
- Observations and results from wider school activities and assessments
- Learning walks
- Pupils' performance and progress, including scrutiny of pupils' work
- Pupil progress reviews
- Quality of reports and other expected 'paperwork'
- Evidence of the wider contribution to the work of the school
- Evidence of their impact on the effectiveness of other teachers or staff
- Improvements in specific elements of practice, such as behaviour management, development of pedagogy or providing feedback
- Self-assessment documentation
- CPD records
- Professional dialogue

The range and level of evidence collected for appraisal purposes will always be proportionate and minimise workload where possible.

3.1 Observation

This school believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is an important way of assessing teachers' performance and identifying any particular strengths and areas for development they may have. It can also capture useful information which can inform school improvement more generally. All observation will be carried out in a professional and supportive manner.

For the purposes of appraisal, teachers' performance will be observed on an appropriate and reasonable number of occasions. Wherever possible observations will be agreed in advance by the appraiser with the appraisee, giving reasonable notice and confirming the context of the lesson to be observed, based on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the school.

The total amount of classroom observation arranged for each teacher will be no more than 3 hours in each appraisal period. In exceptional circumstances this maximum limit may be exceeded, where concerns have been raised about a teacher's performance, or where the teacher requests additional observation visits or voluntarily participates in peer observations. This limit does not apply in circumstances outside of the appraisal process e.g. for reviews linked to school improvement, for school self-evaluation purposes, during OFSTED inspections or for teachers subject to the capability policy.

The observation should provide evidence of the teacher's performance against the Teachers Standards and evidence to inform the achievement of objectives. Classroom observations will normally be undertaken by the headteacher, or another appropriate colleague, who has Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

Oral feedback will be given as soon as possible after the observation and, wherever possible, no later than the end of the following working day. Written feedback will be provided within five working days.

The written feedback will include the date on which the observation took place, the activities and actions observed and the length of the observation. The teacher will be able to add or attach written comments to the feedback document. If issues emerge that were not part of the focus of the observation these will also be covered in the written feedback and action taken where appropriate, in accordance with this policy.

Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development. This could result in areas for development which feed into an individual teacher's continuing professional development (CPD) or areas of strength which may feed into CPD across the school. For example, this could include the development of peer and/or joint observations with staff, as part of their CPD development.

In addition to formal observations, the headteacher, or other appropriate colleague, may 'drop in' or undertake learning walks, or consider other whole school evidence to evaluate the standards of teaching and to ensure that the high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of 'drop ins' and learning walks, and the notice given, will vary depending on specific circumstances.

Teachers, including the headteacher, who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities assessed and evaluated for impact.

3.2 Interim appraisal review meetings

Appraisers should carry out interim appraisal review meetings with the appraisee at appropriate points during the appraisal period to discuss overall performance, including progress towards objectives and an assessment against the Teachers Standards and their job role and responsibilities. The teacher will have the opportunity to add their own comments to the interim appraisal review document.

Objectives should be reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and amended as appropriate, in line with school circumstances and needs.

A template interim appraisal review meeting form is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#).

4 Annual appraisal review

Each teacher's overall performance will be formally assessed for each appraisal period and an annual appraisal review meeting will take place to discuss this assessment. When assessing the overall performance of the headteacher, the performance management governors must consult the external adviser e.g. School Leadership Adviser.

At the annual appraisal review meeting the appraiser must fully explain whether the teacher's overall performance meets the required standards, including whether they have met their performance objectives, have fully met the Teachers Standards and have effectively carried out their job role and responsibilities.

In addition, Upper Pay Range teachers will be assessed to determine whether they are highly competent in all of the Teachers Standards and that their achievements and contribution to the school has been substantial and sustained. Definitions within this school for substantial and sustained are included in section 1.2 of this policy.

In addition to assessing a teacher's achievement of objectives, it is important for line managers to also discuss workload, wellbeing, working hours, flexible working opportunities, and career aspirations in a supportive manner. This can help the teacher identify strategies to effectively manage their workload and wellbeing, as well as provide feedback to management for further improvement and retention.

This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but teacher's overall performance and development priorities should be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year during interim review meetings.

The teacher will receive a written report of their appraisal at the end of each appraisal period. In this school, teachers will receive their appraisal reports by 31 October (31 December for the headteacher). Teachers will have the opportunity to add their own comments to the appraisal report.

The appraisal report will include:

- details of the teacher's objectives for the appraisal period and whether these have been met
- an assessment of the teacher's overall performance, including assessment against their objectives, the Teachers Standards and of carrying out their role and responsibilities
- an assessment of the teacher's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them

A template teacher annual appraisal assessment report is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#).

The assessment of overall performance and of professional development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period. The annual appraisal review meeting at the end of the review period to assess overall performance may be combined with the appraisal objective setting meeting (see section 2) for the coming appraisal period, or two separate meetings may take place, whichever is deemed appropriate by the appraiser.

5 Raising concerns about a teacher's performance

Where there are concerns about any aspects of the teacher's overall performance, including progress towards meeting objectives, meeting the Teachers Standards or effectively carrying out their job role and responsibilities, this should be raised with the teacher at the earliest opportunity. Early dialogue with teachers that have emerging performance issues, will facilitate appropriate prompt support being put in place to ensure teachers have the appropriate guidance and opportunity to improve in the relevant areas. This will minimise, wherever possible, a situation where a teacher's overall performance does not meet the required standards.

In the case of performance concerns regarding a headteacher, a performance management governor(s) would undertake the process as appraiser.

As soon as performance concerns arise the appraiser will invite the teacher to an interim appraisal review meeting to:

- give clear feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the performance concerns
- give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the performance concerns
- discuss and agree a support plan which:
 - sets clear required improvements
 - details any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations) that will be provided to help address the specific concerns
 - sets timescales for review
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made, e.g. potential move to the formal Capability Policy.

The headteacher, or other appropriate colleague, may take on the appraiser responsibilities within the appraisal process, whilst a teacher's performance concerns are being addressed.

A template support plan is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#).

A review meeting with the teacher will be held at the end of the support plan period to discuss progress and to explain whether the required improvements have been made. Review comments should be recorded on the support plan.

If the appraiser is satisfied that the teacher has made sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.

If the teacher does not sustain these improvements, the appraiser will determine whether it is appropriate to implement another support plan or to move to the formal capability process. A copy of the capability policy is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#).

If appraisers have any queries regarding this process, they can contact the HR Advice and Support team for advice.

5.1 Transition to capability policy

The school's Capability Policy (Teachers) sets out the arrangements that will apply where a teacher falls below the levels of competence that are expected of them.

If a teacher demonstrates serious performance concerns that have been unable to be resolved through the appraisal process, the teacher will be notified in writing that the appraisal policy will no longer apply and that their performance will now be managed under the Capability Policy. At this point the teacher will be invited to a stage 1 capability performance meeting with the headteacher, or other appropriate person, to discuss the concerns.

Where a teacher has been subject to capability procedures via the school's Capability Policy at any point during the appraisal year, pay progression will not be awarded.

In the case of performance concerns regarding a headteacher a performance management governor(s) would undertake the process as appraiser.

It is recommended that the HR Advice and Support team is contacted for advice regarding the process prior to moving a teacher onto the Capability Policy.

6 General principles underlying this policy

6.1 Confidentiality

The appraisal process will be treated with confidentiality and only shared with appropriate staff who input into the appraisal process. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the headteacher and governing body to quality assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal policy.

Information gathered during the observation will be used, as appropriate, for a variety of purposes including informing on school self-evaluation and school improvement strategies in accordance with the school's commitment to streamlining data collection and minimising bureaucracy and workload burdens on teachers. Every step should be taken to ensure anonymity of staff concerned in the use of such data.

6.2 Consistency of treatment and fairness

The governing body 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 governing body is aware of the guidance on the Equality Act issued by the Department for Education.

6.3 Definitions

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to "teacher" include the headteacher.

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to "governing body" include committees, or individuals e.g. chair of governors/headteacher, who have been given delegated responsibility by the governing body.

6.4 Delegation

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

6.5 Monitoring and evaluation

The governing body will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's Appraisal Policy for teaching staff. This will include ensuring that the appraisal process minimises the impact on workload for all parties involved.

The school should have an appropriate moderation system in place to ensure consistent and fair treatment during the appraisal process. This system will ensure all appraisers are working to the same standards when setting objectives and assessing overall performance and that the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) is fully met to ensure that discrimination does not occur. This may include the headteacher or an appropriate colleague moderating all, or a sample of, the performance objectives and overall performance outcomes for all teachers to ensure consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers.

A summary of the DfE advice on responsibilities in appraisal is available on the [Durham Schools Portal](#)

6.6 Retention

The governing body and headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained and stored in a secure place in line with the school's retention policy/procedures.



HR Advice and Support

For advice regarding the application of this policy please contact:

HR Advice and Support

hradvice@durham.gov.uk

Pay, Reward and Employment Services can be contacted by emailing:

Schools

PESSchools@durham.gov.uk

Further support can be accessed by contacting:

Occupational Health

occhealthadmin@durham.gov.uk

Health and Safety

hsteam@durham.gov.uk

Employee Assistance Programme

wisdom.healthassured.org/login

Employer Code MHA042951

Tel 0800 0280199

School policies and guidance documents will be reviewed periodically as required, and in accordance with any changes to legislation and best practice.

The school complies with all relevant statutory obligations. The school privacy notice provides more specific information on data collected and how it is handled, a copy of which can be accessed from the school. For more information, please contact the school directly.

If you have any concerns about how your data is handled, please contact either the school Data Protection Officer (details available from the school office), or the Information Commissioner's Office

Author	Version	Last review
RP	v 3.1	September 2025