

Willowcroft Community School



Teacher Appraisal Policy

2025/26

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Statement of intent

This policy sets out the framework for clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, including the headteacher. It is designed to support teachers' development, within the context of the school's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers.

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

Academies are not legally required to follow the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Appraisal Regulations), but it is considered good practice to do so.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 (as amended)
- The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012
- DfE 'Maintained schools governance guide'
- DfE 'Academy trust governance guide'
- DfE 'Teacher appraisal'
- DfE 'Teacher appraisal and capability: A model policy for schools'
- DfE 'Teachers' Standards'
- DfE 'Staffing and employment advice for schools'
- DfE 'Implementing your school's approach to pay'
- DfE 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'
- DfE School teachers' pay and conditions document 2024 and guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Teacher Capability Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Teachers' Pay Policy
- Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the effectiveness of this policy by monitoring and reviewing it annually.

- Ensuring this policy and the appraisal process has been workload impact assessed, to minimise impact on teacher and school leader workload.
- Ensuring that all members of staff have read and understood the provisions in this policy.
- Agreeing the extent to which specific functions relating to the appraisal process will be delegated to others.
- Monitoring the outcome of appraisal decisions and check that processes operate fairly.
- Appraising the headteacher by:
 - Setting their objectives, with advice from an appropriate external adviser.
 - Ensuring all objectives contribute towards the School Improvement Plan and improve the education of pupils at the school.
 - Taking advice from an external adviser on the assessment of the headteacher’s performance.
 - Providing the headteacher with their agreed appraisal report.
 - Ensuring all members of the board are informed that the appraisal process has taken place.
 - Making a recommendation on headteacher’s pay, where relevant.
- Ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and abiding by all relevant equality legislation.
- Ensuring all delegated responsibilities are conducted.
- Determining the appraisal period that applies to teachers (including the headteacher).
- Ensuring that appraisal evidence informs other decisions, including decisions related to professional development and pay where relevant.
- Being responsible for ensuring appeals are managed in line with the school appraisal policy.
- Ensuring eligible governors receive relevant training on the appraisal process.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- Reviewing, developing and streamlining this policy, consulting staff and union representatives as appropriate.
- Submitting this policy to the governing body for approval.
- Ensuring that all teachers are made aware of the policy and that they have the knowledge and skills to apply procedures fairly and effectively.
- Moderating appraisal outcomes.

- Keeping records of the decisions and recommendations in order to demonstrate that all judgements have been made objectively, and in compliance with the school's policy and equalities legislation.
- Ensuring that teachers are notified in writing of any recommendations made and decisions reached.
- Ensuring that the appraisal process is managed in a way that avoids increased workload for all parties concerned.
- Deciding who will appraise teachers.
- Informing teachers of the standards against which their performance in the set appraisal period will be assessed.
- Conducting drop-in observations, where necessary, to evaluate standards of teaching and ensure high standards of professional performance are maintained.
- Providing teachers with their appraisal reports or delegating this task, as appropriate.
- Developing clear arrangements for pay progression and advising the relevant body on pay recommendations for teachers, including whether a teacher at the school who applied to be paid on the upper pay range should be paid on that range.
- Ensuring that appraisers alongside appraisees identify relevant sources of evidence, at the point of objective setting, including those that will routinely be gathered as part of normal school activity, including monitoring the quality of provision.

Appraisers will be responsible for:

- Reviewing teachers' performance and professional development on an annual basis against the Teachers' Standards and in accordance with this policy.
- Using their professional judgement to review teachers' performance.
- Addressing any concerns or difficulties that the teacher they are appraising has raised.
- Taking into account the expectations of the teacher in accordance with their role and the relevant stage of their career.
- Helping teachers reflect on their achievements and future development.
- Writing appraisal reports for the headteacher.

Teaching staff will be responsible for:

- Participating in arrangements for their own appraisal in line with their school's appraisal policy and ensuring that they understand their responsibilities and the arrangements within their school.
- Keeping records of their objectives and identifying evidence as part of review throughout the appraisal process.

- Where applicable, appraising the performance of other teachers (as delegated by the school leader, and in accordance with the provisions of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) on the payment of Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments (TLRs) for such duties that are allocated to teachers not part of the leadership group).
- Participating fully in the training provided to undertake their delegated tasks.
- Improving their teaching through proactive engagement in appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.
- Voicing concerns where they believe the appraisal process is causing unnecessary challenges, e.g. in terms of wellbeing or workload.
- Reflecting on their own performance and how this could be improved.

2. General principles underlying this policy

Confidentiality

The appraisal process will be treated with confidentiality; however, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the headteacher and the governing board to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

This will be achieved by the headteacher and governing board:

- Personally reviewing a sample of teachers' appraisal records for consistency.
- Being informed of any pay recommendations that have been made and the rationale behind these.

Consistency of treatment and fairness

The governing board is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness throughout the appraisal process.

It is also committed to ensuring that all teachers, regardless of their protected characteristics, are treated fairly, and recognises that identical treatment and evaluation processes may not be fair for all teachers. The governing board will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to the appraisal process where appropriate and necessary, e.g. for teachers with disabilities.

Delegation

Normal rules (as set out in The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009) will apply in respect of the delegation of functions by the governing board and headteacher.

In academy trusts, the trust board is free to decide which functions it delegates – all delegations must be recorded in the scheme of delegation.

3. Performance appraisal

This section of the policy applies to the headteacher and to all teachers employed by the school, 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 will always be applied in a way that is robust whilst minimising the impact on workload for teachers, line managers, school leaders and governing bodies.

Appraisal at this school will be supportive, and the developmental process is designed to ensure that all teachers have, or will 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. Appraisal outcomes will be used to inform pay progression decisions.

The appraisal period

The appraisal period will run for 12 months.

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

The school will amend the appraisal period's length in certain circumstances. Where a teacher starts their employment at the school during the course of an appraisal period, the headteacher, or governing board in the case of a new headteacher, will determine how long their appraisal process will be. The aim will be to ensure that all teachers are brought onto the same appraisal cycle as soon as is practicable.

Appointing appraisers

Headteacher appraisal

The headteacher will be appraised by a panel of the governing board, ideally an odd number but a minimum of three, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the governing board for that purpose.

The Trust board will maintain oversight of headteacher appraisals, ensuring they are conducted effectively, and with integrity.

Teacher appraisal

The headteacher will decide who will appraise other teachers on a case-by-case basis and will ensure that all appraisers of teachers will be suitably trained and have QTS.

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 will be expected to use their professional judgement when appraising teachers' performance.

The school will not adopt rigid models that seek to set out exactly what the relevant standards mean for teachers at different stages in their careers and teachers will not be expected routinely to provide evidence that they meet all the standards.

Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, teachers will be informed by the headteacher or their line manager of the standards against which their performance in the set appraisal period will be assessed.

With the exception of those who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding and maintaining Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, all teachers will be assessed against the most recent set of standards contained in the Teachers' Standards document.

For teachers who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding QTLS status, the governing body or headteacher will decide which standards are most appropriate

Setting objectives

The headteacher's objectives will be set by the governing board after consultation with the external adviser, taking into account the headteacher's work-life balance. These objectives will be agreed by the headteacher.

Objectives for each teacher will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period.

The headteacher will ensure that the school shows 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 (SMART) 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.

Objectives will 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.

Teacher objectives will be aspirational yet achievable and based on success criteria which are in their control. Objectives will 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.

Teachers' performance will be assessed against their objectives, and the relevant standards.

The appraiser will 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 will relate directly to objectives, be agreed in advance and be readily available from day-to-day practice.

Numerical targets will not be set if it is beyond the teacher's control to achieve them.

The school will generally set no more than three appraisal targets, and will not set sub-targets, save for in exceptional circumstances.

Observation

The school believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important, both in assessing teachers' performance to identify any particular strengths and areas for development they may have, and for gaining useful information which could inform improvement. Observation can also enable teachers to learn from each other and collaborate.

All observations will be conducted in a supportive fashion and not add to teacher workload.

The following guidelines will be adhered to:

- The number of official observations will not exceed three sessions per year
- Observations will not exceed one hour per session
- The focus and timing of annual observation sessions will be agreed in consultation with the teacher
- Observations will be conducted with professionalism, integrity, courtesy and objectivity
- Observation reports will be accurate and fair
- The confidentiality of the information in the report will be respected
- Observations will not add to teachers' overall workload
- At least five working days' notice will be given of the date and time of the observation
- Verbal feedback will be provided by the end of the working week
- Written feedback will be provided within five working days.

The governing board will determine whether teaching staff can refuse to share their lesson plans during observations – this decision will be communicated to all teaching staff and their appraisers. Classroom observation will be conducted by those with QTS.

Evidence

The range and level of evidence collected for the purposes of appraisal and pay determination (where relevant) will always be proportionate and the impact on workload will be minimal.

Evidence used will relate directly to the pre-agreed objectives. The form of the evidence will be agreed with the teacher in advance, and will be material, or contain material, which is readily available from day-to-day practice.

Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. . The school encourages a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development.

Professional development will be linked to improvement priorities in the school improvement priorities , and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

Feedback

Teachers will receive constructive, supportive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place, or when other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development..

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 will 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:

- Give clear feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns.
- Give the teacher an opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns.
- Set clear objectives for required improvement.
- 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.
- In circumstances where it is appropriate to revise objectives, sufficient time will be allowed for improvement - the amount of time will reflect the seriousness of the concerns.
- Explain the implications and process if no or insufficient improvement is made, for example the potential for movement into formal capability proceedings.

When progress is reviewed, 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 and has not responded to support provided within the appraisal process, the teacher will be notified in writing that:

- The appraisal system will no longer apply.
- Their performance will be managed under the capability procedure.
- They will be invited to a formal capability meeting.

Capability procedures will be conducted in accordance with the school's Teacher Capability Policy.

Annual assessment

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

In assessing the performance of the headteacher, the governing board will consult the external adviser.

This assessment is the final stage of the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in interim meetings and a mid-term review.

The teacher will, as soon as practicable, receive and have the opportunity to comment on an appraisal report – this may be written in hard copy format or made available online. Teachers will receive their appraisal reports by 31 October (31 December for the headteacher). 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 their responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards.
- 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.
- A recommendation on pay progression where that is relevant.

Teachers can appeal to the headteacher, and the headteacher can appeal to the governing board if they disagree with the content of the appraisal report.

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

Pay progression

From the 2024/25 academic year, the requirement for objectives and the appraisal process to lead to performance-related pay outcomes for teachers and leaders was removed; however, the statutory requirement to make a pay decision following the completion of the appraisal process remains.

Schools can choose whether or not to retain some or all elements of performance related pay, but a school's pay policy should minimise the impact on workload for individual teachers, line managers, school leaders and governing boards.

Schools who have chosen to remove the performance related pay requirement are under no obligation to increase an individual's pay where a teacher is in formal capability procedures. Schools who have retained performance related pay should only withhold pay progression in the event of poor performance as set out in their pay policy. Schools should ensure that teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory are supported appropriately.

The school will ensure that all teachers receive regular, constructive feedback on their performance and development and are subject to annual appraisal that recognises their strengths, informs plans for their future development, and helps to enhance their professional practice.

Following an individual teacher's annual appraisal and, subject to the provisions of the published pay policy, they should expect to receive pay progression within the maximum of their pay range unless they are subject to capability procedures.

Appraisal and pay determination cycle

The school will adhere to the following appraisal and pay determination cycle in accordance with the DfE's 'Managing Teachers' and Leaders' Pay' guidance:

- Performance will be continually monitored in accordance with this policy.
- In the autumn term all objectives and success criteria will be finalised. If an agreement cannot be reached, the appraiser will set them.
- Appraisal cycles will be completed before the end of the summer term.
- At the end of the appraisal year, teachers will receive an appraisal report which includes an assessment against their objectives and success criteria, the relevant standards and a recommendation on pay progression.
- Every teacher will be provided with an annual pay statement and a copy of the school's pay policy by 31 October each year, including appeals procedure, ensuring that any revisions to the pay policy are included.
- The headteacher will ensure moderation of initial recommendations with a view to putting individual pay progression recommendations to the governing board for agreement and to account them overall for the effective operation of links between pay and performance.
- The pay and appraisal policies will be reviewed as necessary in light of experience and any changes to the STPCD.
- The governing board will determine what provision should be made in the school's budget for pay awards and progression.
- Appraisal objectives and success criteria, linked to pay progression, will be set up for the next appraisal period.

The governing board and headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place **for six years in line** with the school's Records Management Policy and in accordance with DfE guidance.

4. Monitoring and review

The governing board and headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the school's appraisal arrangements, including monitoring the impact on workload.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.