



Southwark Diocesan
Board of Education
Multi-Academy Trust

TEACHER APPRAISAL POLICY

Part of the 2025/2026 Trust Operating Manual

TEACHER APPRAISAL POLICY

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TEACHER APPRAISAL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out our framework for all our Schools for clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, including the Headteacher, and for supporting their development.
- 1.2 This policy applies to the Headteacher and to all teachers employed by us, except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (i.e. NQTs) and those who are subject to our **Capability policy**.

2. OUR OVERRIDING PURPOSE

Our aim is for all teaching in all lessons by all teachers in all our Schools to be good or outstanding to ensure the best possible education for all our students. This policy supports that aim by:

- (a) ensuring that appraisal in each of our Schools will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively;
- (b) ensuring that the process promotes professional dialogue between colleagues;
- (c) ensuring that teachers are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop as teachers; and
- (d) indicating when matters may move out of this Teacher Appraisal policy and into the **Capability policy**.

3. THE APPRAISAL CYCLE

- 3.1 The appraisal cycle will run for **twelve months** either from 1st November to 31st October, with the first cycle having started on **1st November** or from **1 September to 31 August** with the next cycle starting on 1 September with each School being free to choose its cycle.
- 3.2 Teachers who are employed on a fixed term contract of more than one term but less than one year will have their performance appraised in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of their cycle will be determined by the duration of their contract.
- 3.3 The performance of teachers must be reviewed on an annual basis. Appraisal objectives and reviews must be completed for all teachers by 31 October and for the Headteacher and Senior Leadership team by 31 December.
- 3.4 Appraisal objectives and the formal review of the previous year's performance must be set during the Autumn Term. The objectives will inform and support the School's development and improvement plans for the coming financial and academic years. The School will take account of proposed development needs in setting the School's overall priorities for staff development.
- 3.5 Appraisal is an on-going cycle involving three stages:

Stage 1	The Setting of Objectives for the new appraisal cycle.
Stage 2	The review of performance for the previous appraisal cycle.
Stage 3	Ongoing monitoring of performance, to include Lesson Observations. Such monitoring activity is expected to identify any performance issues and to put in place appropriate programmes of support to improve performance. The employee will be provided with appropriate feedback as part of these monitoring activities, where notes will be taken for reference in the End of Year review.

- 3.6 Where a teacher starts their employment part-way through a cycle, the School shall determine the length of the first cycle for that teacher, with a view to bringing the cycle into line with the annual cycle for other teachers at the School as soon as possible. For example a teacher joining in September will have objectives set for the appraisal cycle ending in October of the following academic year.
- 3.7 Where a teacher transfers to a new post part-way through a cycle, the School shall determine whether to amend the objectives, and whether to change the Appraiser, depending on the extent to which the teachers' responsibilities and job description have changed.
- 3.8 The School will endeavour to schedule appraisal activities within directed time.

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4. APPOINTMENT OF APPRAISERS

- 4.1 Each of our Schools will have a **Leadership Appraisal Group** which will be the Appraiser for the School's Headteacher. It will comprise of up to three Governors (usually including the Chair of Governors), an independent adviser and a member of the Trust Executive Team.
- 4.2 The Headteacher will appoint the Appraiser (and any replacement appraiser) for each teacher taking into account any views of the teacher and their line manager. The appraiser will normally be the line manager, Deputy or Headteacher). The employee may request a replacement Appraiser for any professional or educational reason and such requests will be considered by the Headteacher to make sure the Appraisal process is implemented in a fair and reasonable manner.
- 4.3 An Appraisal cycle will not begin again in the event of the Appraiser being changed.

5. SETTING OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 The Headteacher's objectives will be set by the Leadership Appraisal Group.
- 5.2 Objectives for each teacher will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal cycle. 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.
- 5.3 The appraiser and teacher 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.
- 5.4 If a teacher does not agree with the objectives set they may ask for them to be reviewed by the Headteacher (or in the case of the Headteacher, our Executive Team). There shall be no appeal against the outcome of this review and no right to use the **Grievance Resolution policy** save in circumstances where it is alleged that the objectives have been set are unlawfully discriminatory where the **Grievance Resolution policy** may be used.
- 5.5 At all of our Schools:
- (a) the objectives set for each teacher will, if achieved, contribute to our plans for improving educational provision and performance and pupil progress for all of our pupils;
 - (b) all teachers will be assessed against (and have the object of fulfilling) the Teachers' Standards and the job description of any posts they hold.
 - (c) all teachers will have an objective which focuses on improving their quality of teaching and learning ;
 - (d) all teachers will have an objective relating to pupil progress in relation to the pupils for whom they are responsible, with due reference to staffing structures and curriculum delivery requirements,
 - (e) those teachers with either TLRs or on the Leadership Pay Range may have an objective that relates to their management responsibility;
 - (f) the maximum number of objectives set will be **three**;

6. REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

6.1 Lesson Observation

- (a) Observation of classroom 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 and support they may have and of gaining useful information which can inform school improvement more generally.
- (b) Our Classroom Observation Protocol can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- (c) Each observation will not be given an Ofsted grade.
- (d) All observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion with professionalism, integrity and courtesy and will be evaluated objectively and reported accurately and fairly. They will be used as part of a process of developing practice rather than a "snap shot" of performance.

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- (e) Teachers' performance will normally be observed for a maximum of 3 hours and 3 formal observations, with each formal observation being of a minimum length of 30 minutes unless there is evidence available that causes concern with regards to the employees' performance. In such circumstances more frequent monitoring and interventions to help the teacher improve their performance will be agreed with the teacher, in order to bring their performance up to the relevant standard. The amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the School. Classroom observation will be carried out by those with QTS.
- (f) In addition to formal observation, Headteachers, their representatives or others with responsibility for teaching standards (which may include members of the Leadership Team or Subject/Faculty Leaders) may undertake "learning walks" in order to evaluate the standards of teaching and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained across the School. The length and frequency of "learning walks" will vary depending on specific circumstances but would normally be of a short duration and would not comprise evidence to formal feedback but, where serious concerns are noted, may lead to additional observations in the appraisal process. This should not be a simple "tick box" exercise but more properly an overall assessment of teaching and learning across the School.
- (g) Our Learning Walks' Protocol can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- (h) Teachers (including the Headteacher) who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed and assessed.

6.2 Mid-Year Reviews

- (a) In accordance with Stage 3 of the appraisal cycle the appraiser will monitor the performance of the teacher and thereafter meet the teacher, as part of observation feedback meetings, to facilitate a professional conversation with them with the purpose of checking the teachers' progress towards objectives and compliance with the Teachers' Standards and the requirements of their job description. Progress towards achieving objectives must be formally recorded and any concerns over performance to be promptly identified and appropriate support programmes put in place.
- (b) It may also be necessary to review the original objectives set due to a change in circumstances, for example, the teacher's post and/or responsibilities have changed or the teacher is on long term sick leave. Each School must ensure that its Directed Time budget allocates time for a mid-year review and not hold them during PPA time.

6.3 End of Year Review

The appraiser must meet the teacher to review the whole appraisal cycle in September or October after which the appraiser will produce the Final Appraisal Report. 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 for example:

- (a) lesson Observations;
- (b) work Scrutiny / Book Looks as part of lesson observations and Formal Mid Year Reviews (ensuring a representative sample is taken);
- (c) review of pupil progress data, taking into account Ofsted guidance;
- (d) observation and scrutiny of leadership and management activities;

6.4 Self-Review

- (a) The teacher will be given time to review themselves against Teachers Standards, in particular those relating to their three objectives, in advance of any review meeting under this policy in order to ensure that the meeting is an informed professional dialogue between colleagues.
- (b) The self review is an opportunity for the teacher to reflect and is a professional dialogue which does not require additional forms or evidenced documentation to be completed.

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6.5 Final Appraisal Report

- (a) The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of year review - and have the opportunity to comment in writing on in order to reach agreement on the content and conclusions within - a written appraisal report. Teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 October (31 December for the head teacher and senior leadership team). The appraisal report will include:
 - (i) details of the teacher's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
 - (ii) an assessment of the teacher's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards;
 - (iii) an assessment of the teacher's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
 - (iv) a note of all other evidence listed in our **Teacher Pay policy**; and
 - (v) a pay recommendation in accordance with our **Teacher Pay policy**.
- (b) Substantial or significant progress towards the achievement of a challenging objective, even if the performance criteria have not been met in full, will be assessed favourably.
- (c) If the teacher is not satisfied with the decision taken by the School following the pay recommendation the teacher may use the appeal process set out in our **Teacher Pay policy**.
- (d) If the teacher is not satisfied with the contents of the appraisal report the teacher may ask the appraiser to review it and such a review may include the appraiser consulting with the Headteacher or a member of our Executive Team or their nominee (or his nominee) if appropriate.

7. SCHOOL RESPONSE TO APPRAISAL

7.1 Feedback

- (a) 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 with a target of giving feedback within **5 school days**.
- (b) Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that need improvement.

7.2 Development and Support

- (a) Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. We wish to encourage a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

7.3 Support Action meeting

- (a) Where teachers are experiencing difficulty with performance the appraiser will meet the teacher to:
 - (i) give clear feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
 - (ii) give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
 - (iii) agree any appropriate support or other remedial action (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
 - (iv) 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 a minimum of **6 weeks** and a maximum of **13 weeks** for improvement. The amount of time will be decided by the School but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns)
 - (v) In cases where there are serious safeguarding or health and safety concerns the review period may be reduced to **4 weeks**.

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- (vi) explain the implications and process if no - or insufficient - improvement is made.
- (b) 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.
- (c) All teachers can experience difficulties at some point in their career. We would expect that in the majority of cases positive support and collaborative working would be sufficient to resolve any issues.

7.4 Transition to **Capability policy**

- (a) If after support action is taken, the appraiser remains unsatisfied with the teacher's progress to reaching the required standards, the teacher will be invited to a meeting to discuss this before a decision is made to transition to the **Capability policy**.
- (b) A teacher may be represented at this meeting by a Trade Union representative or workplace colleague.
- (c) Following this meeting if the appraiser remains unsatisfied they will then arrange a formal capability meeting under our **Capability policy**.

8. GOVERNORS

- 8.1 A Governor (other than the Headteacher) does not have the right to observe lessons.
- 8.2 Governors' structured visits are a useful way for Governors to gain a deeper understanding of the educational context of the School. Nothing in this policy prevents Governors entering lessons as part of a Governor's structured visit to the School.
- 8.3 Governors entering lessons on such structured visits shall not take notes and shall not feedback to the teacher observed.
- 8.4 No evidence from a Governor in relation to a structured visit (other than any child protection or safeguarding incident) may be used as part of appraisal or any capability or disciplinary process.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1 The whole appraisal process and the documents generated under it, in particular, will be treated with confidentiality at all times. Review statements will be confidential to the Headteacher.

10. CONSISTENCY

- 10.1 We are committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of Appraisal. To ensure this the following provisions are made in relation to moderation, quality assurance and objective setting.
- 10.2 The Headteacher will moderate a sample of Performance Objectives to check that they:
 - (a) are consistent between those who have similar experience and similar levels of responsibility; and
 - (b) comply with this Teacher Appraisal policy, and the requirements of equality legislation.
- 10.3 Our Executive Team will review the quality assurance processes and moderate a sample of Performance Objectives and Appraisal Reports to ensure consistency and compliance.

11. RETENTION OF RECORDS

- 11.1 Given the ongoing need to ensure equal pay we shall retain all paperwork relating to any decision whether or not to make a pay rise and shall not destroy any records until at least 7 years after the relevant employee has ceased to be employed by us.

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APPENDIX 1 – CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This governing body is committed to ensuring that classroom observation is developmental and supportive and that those involved in the process will:
- (a) carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
 - (b) seek to reach agreement in advance on how classroom observations are to be carried out;
 - (c) evaluate objectively;
 - (d) report accurately and fairly; and
 - (e) respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

2 Planning and preparing for observation

- 2.1 In keeping with the school governing body's commitment to supportive and developmental classroom observation the head teacher will:
- (a) consult teachers on the pattern of classroom observation which they can expect annually and seek agreement with teachers and union representatives on these arrangements;
 - (b) ensure that those being observed for all purposes will be notified at least five working days in advance;
 - (c) arrange, as far as possible, for all observations to take place at a time agreed between the teacher and the observer;
 - (d) ensure that there is a reasonable amount of time between classroom observations, irrespective of the purpose of those observations;
 - (e) ensure that classroom observation will be undertaken solely by persons with qualified teacher status (QTS) and the appropriate training and professional skills to undertake observation and to provide constructive oral and written feedback and support, in the context of professional dialogue between colleagues.
- 2.2 Planning for observation will take place at the start of the appraisal/performance management cycle and will include details of:
- (a) the amount of observation;
 - (b) the focus of the observation;
 - (c) the duration of the observation;
 - (d) when during the performance management/appraisal cycle the observation will take place; and
 - (e) who will conduct the observation.
- 2.3 In order that classroom observation is kept to a minimum, and to support efforts to deliver the school's commitment to streamlining data collection and minimising bureaucracy and workload burdens on teachers, the information gathered will be used for multiple purposes, including informing school self-evaluation and school improvement strategies. This will enable the head teacher to discharge her/his duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained.
- 2.4 Before any classroom observation is conducted, there will be an opportunity for the reviewer and teacher to meet within directed time in order that the context of the lesson to be observed can be discussed.

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3 Conducting observation

- 3.1 There should be a limit of a total of three observations for all purposes. Under no circumstances shall the total time occupied by all observations exceed three hours per year and the focus and timing must be agreed in the teacher's performance management planning statement.
- 3.2 Neither pupils nor governors will undertake observations (although governors may, by specific agreement with the teacher concerned, visit a lesson to familiarise themselves with their link area).

4 Feedback and records

- 4.1 Oral feedback will be given as soon as possible after the observation and no later than the end of the following working day. It will be given during directed time in a suitable, private environment. Time for preparation and feedback for classroom observation will be made available, in addition to PPA time.
- 4.2 Written feedback will be provided within five working days of the observation taking place. If issues emerged from an observation that were not part of the focus of the observation as recorded in the planning and review statement, these should also be covered in the written feedback and the appropriate action discussed with the teacher.
- 4.3 The written record of feedback will include the date on which the observation took place, the lesson observed and the length of the observation. The teacher has the right to append written comments on the feedback document. No written notes in addition to the written feedback and teacher's comments will be kept. The reviewer will be given sufficient time within the school day to put in written form the conclusions agreed with the reviewee on the outcomes of the classroom observation.
- 4.4 Teachers will have access to all written accounts of the observation after their lessons and, if they request, copies will be provided.

5 Classroom observation and formal capability procedures

- 5.1 For teachers on a formal capability procedure an important part of the support offered to the teacher will be a clearly defined amount of classroom observation with structured oral and written feedback. The amount of classroom observation will be discussed with the teacher and their union representative who is supporting and advising them in the formal process.

APPENDIX 2 – LEARNING WALKS’ PROTOCOL

- 1 ‘Learning walks’ may take place in order to collect evidence about teaching and learning, evidence of progress and areas for school development. They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgemental and are a whole-school improvement activity. There should, therefore, be no attempt to use this approach as part of capability procedures or for appraisal.
 - (a) A programme of ‘learning walks’ should be agreed with teachers so that they know the date, time and focus of the learning walk and who will be conducting it, so that they can organise their classes accordingly.
 - (b) The purpose or focus of a ‘learning walk’ should be explained to all relevant staff prior to its commencement. That purpose or focus will not relate to the performance of an individual.
 - (c) ‘Learning walks’ will be conducted with minimum disruption to teachers and pupils.
 - (d) ‘Learning walks’ will be undertaken in a supportive and professional manner.
 - (e) A maximum of two colleagues will be involved in ‘learning walks’ at any time.
 - (f) Pupils will not be asked for their views of an individual teacher during ‘learning walks’.
 - (g) Those teachers whose classes are visited will be given the opportunity to see any written records which have been made during the ‘learning walk’.
 - (h) There shall be no evaluation of an individual teacher during a ‘learning walk’.
 - (i) Regular reviews of the operation of ‘learning walks’ will be held with all staff.
 - (j) Any teacher whose classroom is visited during a ‘learning walk’ will have the visit counted towards the overall maximum of three observations per year, each of up to an hour in length
 - (k) Any concerns about the implementation of this protocol should be raised initially with management either by the individual teacher concerned or with the support of the NUT school representative.