



**Unity Schools Trust**

*'Excellence through collaboration'*

# Appraisal Policy

Policy Reviewed:	April 2016
Next Review:	April 2019
Approved by Trust/Local Governing Body	

## **Introduction and Purpose of Policy**

1. This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of staff at the Unity Schools Trust (the Trust) and for supporting their development within the context of the Trust's plan for improving educational provision and performance, the national standards expected of teachers and the role expectations of support staff.

The appraisal system in this Trust is intended to be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all members of staff:

- have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively;
- can continue to improve their professional practice and to develop further in their role

For teaching staff, the appraisal system also provides the basis for ensuring that teachers receive fair pay progression awards reflecting their achievements and contribution, in accordance with the Trust's pay policy.

This policy applies to all staff (including the headteacher) employed by the Trust except those on contracts of less than one term, teachers undergoing induction (i.e. NQTs) and those who are the subject of capability procedures or a period of probationary service.

The Trust is mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and this policy will be applied fairly and consistently to all staff employed at the Trust, with the exceptions outlined above.

## **2. The Appraisal Period**

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

Employees who are engaged on a temporary or fixed term contract likely to last for 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 known or likely duration of the contract.

## **3. Appointing Appraisers**

The headteacher(s) will be appraised by the Trust, supported by an external adviser who has been appointed by the Trust for the purpose. The task of appraising the headteacher(s), including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group consisting of two members of the Trust.

The headteacher of each school will determine who will appraise other members of staff.

## **4. Setting Objectives**

### **4.1 General**

Objectives for each member of staff will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set for each appraisee will be 'SMART' (i.e. specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) and will be appropriate to the individual's role and level of experience. It may be determined that specific objectives require a longer time span than a single appraisal period, in which case appropriate milestones towards the achievement of such objectives will be built in, in order to monitor progress within each appraisal period.

The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives. Where this is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change.

### **4.2 Teaching Staff**

The headteacher's objectives will be set by the Trust after consultation with the external adviser.

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

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.

Objectives will be subject to moderation before they are finalised in accordance with the Trust's arrangements for monitoring and evaluation in section 7.

### **4.3 Support Staff**

It is the aim of the Trust that all support staff will take part in the appraisal process. Although the appraisal process may require adaptation for different roles, the Trust will continue to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to have their performance reviewed on an annual basis.

Objectives will relate to the Trust's plans for improving educational provision where relevant to the individual's role; otherwise (or in addition) they may relate to progress in a specific task and/or professional development.

Relevant occupational or professional standards may be used as a backdrop for the appraisal discussion where appropriate.

## **5. Agreeing Evidence Base and Reviewing Performance**

### **5.1 Reviewing Teachers' Performance**

#### Classroom Observation

This Trust believes that 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 they may have and of gaining useful information which can inform Trust improvement more generally. All observation will be carried out in a supportive fashion.

Teachers' performance will be regularly observed but the amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the Trust. Teachers can, however, expect to be formally observed on a minimum of three occasions in any appraisal cycle. Classroom observation will be carried out by those with QTS. In addition to formal observation, headteachers or other 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.

### Other Evidence

In addition to classroom observations, the reviewer will discuss, and wherever possible agree with each teacher, the evidence base to be used for assessment at the end of the appraisal period. The evidence base may vary according to the chosen objectives and any development focus but is likely to include:

- Lesson plans
- Book scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Pupil progress data
- Examination / test outcomes
- Pupil / parental surveys

### Other Responsibilities

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

## **5.2 Reviewing Support Staff Performance**

The process of reviewing support staff performance may involve a mixture of informal and formal evidence gathering and assessment. For teaching assistants, data will normally consist of evidence of student work or progress. For other support staff there may be evidence from project documentation or from co-workers, customers or managers which can feed into the process.

## **5.3 Development and Support**

Appraisal is designed to be a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The Trust wishes to encourage a culture in which all members of staff take responsibility for improving their performance through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to Trust improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual members of staff.

## **5.4 Feedback**

All members of staff 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 further development. Where there are concerns about any aspects of the individual's performance the appraiser will arrange to meet the member of staff to:

- give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the member of staff the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations for teachers), 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.

The appraisal plan will be revised as necessary to reflect any changes, such as to the objectives or planned development activities.

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

## **5.5 Transition to Capability Procedures**

If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, the member of staff will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure. They will be invited to a formal capability meeting in accordance with the Trust's adopted procedure.

## **5.5 Progression To and Through the Upper Pay Range for Teachers**

If a teacher wishes to be considered for progression to the upper pay range, they should follow the process laid out in the Trust's pay policy and submit an application by the deadline in the policy. Copies of the application forms are available via the teacher's reviewer.

Progression through the upper pay range will be based on the outcome of appraisal and assessment against criteria in the Trust's pay policy.

## **5.6 Annual Assessment**

Each member of staff's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the headteacher, the Trust will consult the external adviser.

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 in interim meetings which will take place once a term or otherwise as appropriate to the role. The reviewer will use interim meetings to check progress against objectives and that evidence-gathering is on track to inform the final assessment of performance at the end of the appraisal year.

The appraisee will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment in writing on – a written appraisal

report. Teachers will receive their written appraisal reports by 31 October or 31 December for the headteacher. The appraisal report will include:

- details of the individual's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the appraisee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and,
  - for teachers, the relevant standards or,
  - for support staff, their job description and any occupational or national standards deemed relevant;
- an assessment of the appraisee's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;
- an overall performance rating
- a recommendation on pay, where relevant, in accordance with the Trust's pay policy

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

## **6. Confidentiality**

The appraisal process will be treated with confidentiality. However, the desire for confidentiality does not override the need for the headteacher and Trust to quality assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Trust and headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the Trust's appraisal arrangements. This will be quality assured through:

- Review by a senior leader of a sample of staff objectives to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers;
- Moderation of pay recommendations by the headteacher and Trust for consistency, taking into account the pay progression model adopted by the Trust in the pay policy;
- Appropriate training for reviewers to ensure they are familiar with the Trust's approach to appraisal, objective setting, pay recommendations and role standards; and
- A written annual report to the Trust on the appraisal process by the headteacher's of each school.

## **8. Retention**

The Trust and headteacher will ensure that all written appraisal records are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed.