

Brook Learning Trust

Policy for Appraising Teacher Performance

Introduction

At Brook Learning Trust we bring together our unique academies in our belief in the power of education to change lives and communities. It is our steadfast purpose to challenge and defy the barriers that constrain the educational progress of any child. We set high aims for aspiration and secure collective responsibility for all our children's achievements. Our work is underpinned by the values of Integrity, Respect, Courage, Optimism, Excellence and Accountability.

1. Purpose

Across our Academies we are committed to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning for all our pupils and we believe that appraisal will assist our teachers to achieve this aim through clarity of role and expectations, encouragement, development and feedback. This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers within BLT. Appraisal within BLT 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. The policy will support each teacher's development within the context of the academy's plan for improving educational provision and performance and the Teacher's standards as well as the specific expectations of BLT for all of its teaching staff.

The policy also sets out the Trust's approach to the link between the appraisal process and pay progression.

2. Principles

We will implement our appraisal arrangements on the following principles:

Equality of Opportunity: All staff should be encouraged and supported to achieve their potential through clarity of expectations and job role, regular feedback. Performance review and provision of relevant development.

Consistency of Treatment and fairness: We will take action to ensure the performance appraisal process is fair, non-discriminatory and that staff are treated consistently

High Standards: We believe by setting appropriate and challenging standards of performance and providing suitable feedback and development all staff have the potential to continually improve their performance.

Pay and rewards: Pay progression for staff should reflect their overall contribution to the school both as individuals and as team members.

3. Application of the Appraisal Policy

This policy applies to the Principal and to all qualified teachers employed by BLT with the exception of teachers undergoing their formal period of induction (NQTs) or on contracts of less than a year. The operation of this policy will be suspended for any staff whose performance merits the application of the Trust's staff capability procedure.

Performance appraisal arrangements for temporary and part time staff including job sharers, should apply on the same principles as for full-time, substantive staff. The same degrees of challenge should

apply but the breadth and volume of each element in the process should be proportionate to the period of time worked.

Teachers employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning the provisions of this policy. The length of the cycle will be determined by the duration of their contact.

The intention is that all staff will have equivalent access to appraisal development and support.

4. Policy Framework

Performance appraisal is a shared responsibility. The CEO and those responsible for governance have strategic responsibility for establishing this policy and providing Principals with the support to ensure it is fully implemented and ensuring the Principals receive appropriate performance appraisal themselves in order to set the right framework and culture for teachers within the Academies.

Academy Principals will ensure that this policy and associated regulations and guidance are communicated effectively and that staff with performance appraisal responsibilities have access to appropriate training and preparation.

The appraisal period will run for twelve months normally from September to October.

Where a teacher starts their employment at the Academy part-way through a cycle, the Principal shall determine the length of the first cycle for that teacher, with a view to bringing his/her cycle into line with the cycle for other teachers as soon as possible.

Where a teacher transfers to a new post within the Academy part-way through a cycle, the Principal or, shall determine whether the cycle shall begin again and whether to change the appraiser.

Principals should ensure that staff have access to relevant business plans and school improvement plans to inform the appraisal meeting.

Where it appears that the Appraisee is not meeting or partially meeting the relevant professional standards then the appraisal documentation must clearly set out the support and training that will be provided to address the areas of concern.

Where serious weaknesses are identified in an Appraisee's performance then this procedure should cease and the issues will be managed within the Trust's Staff Capability procedure. The appraisal process will recommence when the Appraisee's performance has reached the required standards.

5. Appointing Appraisers

All appraisers of teachers, other than those appraising Principals, will be teachers and will be suitably trained. The Principal will determine the appropriate appraiser for all staff. The Principal will be appraised by the CEO with a representative of the Academy Council, normally the Chair.

6. The Appraisal cycle

6.1 Objective Setting

The Principals' objectives will be set by the CEO of the Trust enabling elements of these to cascade to the leadership team and beyond as their objectives are then set and enabling a golden thread to run throughout Academy aims and objectives. Appraisees should have objectives set as early on in the appraisal cycle as possible. Objectives should be relevant to the role, responsibilities and take into account experience and career / professional expectations. They

should also link clearly to the school improvement plan objectives, Teachers standards and best practice. The Principal or CEO (as appropriate) will need to consider whether certain teachers should be assessed against other sets of standards published by the Secretary of State or other bodies that are relevant to them. E.g. for QTLS.

The number of objectives must be reasonable (3 – 5) and If achieved will contribute positively to the education of pupils and the implementation designed to improve the school's provision and performance.

Consideration should be given to identifying meaningful objectives which link to whole Academy aims, team / department objectives and professional development. The Brook Learning Trust Teaching Staff Appraisal template suggests:

- 1st Objective – Student Progress / Attainment
- 2nd Objective – Quality of Teaching
- 3rd Objective – Linked to Academy improvement plan
- 4th Objective – (CPD).

The Leadership team or teachers with wider responsibility may expect an additional objective relevant to the role.

The DfE Teacher's Standards and some examples of whole school, Department / Team and individual objectives are attached to the 2018/19 Teacher Appraisal Template.

Appraisees and Appraisers should be encouraged to set challenging but achievable objectives using the term SMART (specific, measurable, achievable but challenging, relevant and time-framed). Progress toward objectives is a good way to show the level of performance required for pay progression and will assist career development. Consideration should be given to ensuring that appraisal objectives can be used to secure good evidence for pay progression in line with the expectations in the school's pay policy.

The objectives will contain a description of what success may look like. Where use of numerical targets is appropriate, these will be reasonable, in the circumstances in which the teacher works and it will be recognised that factors outside teachers' control may significantly affect success.

The Appraiser and Appraisee will seek to agree the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change. Targets will be moderated across the Academy to ensure that they are consistent between teachers with similar experience and levels of responsibility. Should the objectives not be agreed, the final decision on allocation of objectives rests with the Principal. The Academy operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisers are working to the same standards and that the objectives set meet with the improvement plan objectives as well as accounting for the professional aspirations of the teacher.

6.2 Training and Development

Performance appraisal is a developmental process and a key part of the planning discussion around objectives is around the support the Appraisee may need to meet identified objectives and performance criteria. The Academy is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to a level of development appropriate to their role, career stage and performance objectives. Training and development identified from the appraisal process must be recorded on the appraisal form and both parties should review the Personal Professional Development Policy, internal training opportunities and the variety of options around which development and support may take which may not necessarily involve a formal training course. E.g. Coaching, shadowing, external networking.

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 school improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

Each Academy's CPD programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. The Trust Finance Committee will ensure in the budget planning that, as far as possible, resources are made available in the Academy budget for appropriate training, and support agreed for Appraisees' maintaining access on an equitable basis.

An account of the training and development of teachers will form a part of the Principal's reports to the Academy Council about the operation of the appraisal process in the academy.

With regard to the provision of CPD in the case of competing demands on the Academy budget, a decision on relative priority will be taken with regard to the extent to which:

- a) The training and support will help the academy to achieve its priorities; and
- b) The CPD identified is essential for an Appraisee to meet their objectives.

Account will be taken in a review meeting of where it has not been possible for teachers to fully meet their performance criteria because the support recorded in the planning statement has not been provided.

6.3 Recording Appraisal objectives and CPD

Within ten working days the Appraiser will complete a draft appraisal template (see appendix one) and provide a copy to the Appraisee who may request changes if he / she feels the objectives are not SMART. The Appraiser and the Appraisee should retain a copy of the template for mid-year and end of year review meetings.

6.4 Monitoring performance and reviews

Objective setting and identifying development to support success criteria form the first stage of the appraisal cycle. The Appraiser will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support the Appraisee with regular monitoring and feedback. There should be at least one formal mid-year review meeting to discuss performance, provide feedback and discuss the provision of training and development. Academy Principals should audit mid-year reviews with Appraisers to ensure consistency of application.

The Trust believes that observation of classroom practice and other responsibilities is important both as way of assessing performance in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development and of gaining useful information which can inform Academy improvement more generally.

Accordingly, appraisal related observations will be carried out in a supportive fashion, with professionalism, integrity and courtesy, will be evaluated objectively and reported accurately and fairly and will take account of particular circumstances which may affect performance on the day. Classroom observation will be carried out by qualified teachers. Feedback will be supplied in a timely fashion. Copies of written feedback will be retained by a member of the SLT of each academy and passed to the teacher and their curriculum leader / line manager as well.

For the purpose of professional development, feedback about lesson observations should be developmental. The Academies will use the findings of each observation, including appraisal observations, for other management requirements (for example subject monitoring visits).

Teachers (including the Principal) whose posts have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed / evidenced and assessed.

6.5 Changes to appraisal objectives mid cycle

There may be occasions when it is necessary to amend or change the content of the appraisal plan. This may include changes in the Appraisees circumstances, school priorities or local / national policy initiatives. In this event the Appraiser and Appraisee should discuss and ideally agree the change.

6.6 Annual Assessment

At the end of the performance management cycle a formal review meeting will be held where the appraiser and appraisee will discuss achievements, any areas for improvement and professional development activities.

The final review meeting is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed during a mid-year review and following formal observations. This is to ensure there are no surprises at the final review meeting.

Each teacher's performance will be formally assessed in respect of each appraisal period. The CEO will assess the performance of the Principal, accompanied by the Chair of the Academy Council.

The purpose of the review meeting will be to:

- assess the extent to which the appraisee has met their objectives
- determine whether there has been successful overall performance in confirming the appraisee continues to meet the relevant professional standards
- To note additional contributions which have positively impacted on organisational performance
- if necessary, identify the need for additional support, training or development and how this will be met.

The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on - a copy of the written appraisal document. This 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 their objectives, and against relevant standards
- An assessment of the teacher's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them
- A space for the teacher's own comments
- Information relating to any additional contribution made by the member of staff to the academy community
- Reference made to whether Teachers' Standards and Post Threshold Standards, if applicable, have been met.

6.7 Documentation and timeline for pay committee

Appraisal documentation should be completed within the timeline (communicated to Principal's annually). This will allow for Pay recommendations to reach the Pay Committee during December of each year.

The Principal is responsible for submitting the pay recommendations to the Trust pay committee for approval. For recommendations regarding the Principal's pay progression, the CEO will submit their recommendation to the Trust pay committee.

Where teachers are eligible for pay progression, the recommendation will be based on the assessment of their performance against the agreed objectives. The decision made by the relevant decision-making body will be based on the statutory criteria and guidance set out in the 'School Teachers' Pay and Conditions' and the relevant teacher standards.

The Trust Board has agreed the pay policy of BLT and has considered the implications of the appraisal policy with respect to the arrangements relating to teachers' pay in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. The Trust Pay Committee will ensure that decisions on pay progression are made by 31 December.

6.8 Appraisals and Movement to the Upper Pay range

Please refer to the BLT Pay Policy for guidance on applications to move to the UPS. It is important to note that all applications should include the results of the two most recent appraisal reviews.

6.9 Appeals

Appeals against Teachers pay recommendations should be made through the appeals process detailed in the Trust Pay policy.

6.10 Moderation

The Academy Principal is responsible for ensuring that performance appraisal is applied fairly and consistently across the school and that there is a strong link with school improvement. The Principal may therefore make appropriate arrangements for the moderation of performance appraisal reviews and objectives to ensure consistency of approach and expectations between Appraisers. Further monitoring for consistency and application of the policy will be led by the CEO prior to submission of final pay award recommendations to the Pay Committee.

7. Confidentiality & Professional Relationships

The appraisal processes will be treated with confidentiality. Only the Appraiser's line manager or, where s/he had more than one, each of her/his line managers will be provided with access to the Appraisee's plan. This will be done upon request and only where this is necessary to enable the line manager to discharge her/his line management responsibilities.

8. Retention of records

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

POLICY REVIEW AND RATIFICATION

Policy reviewed annually and ratified by the BLT Board in July

This review by HR Manager: June 2018

Summary of changes to this iteration of the policy:

- Insertion of Policy Principals
- Insertion of Policy Framework
- Clarification of appraisal cycle stages
- More detail on setting objectives linked to Standards and improvement plans
- Clarification of when appraisal cycle will be halted and capability process is instigated
- Alternative methods of training and development promoted
- Clarification of recording of appraisal targets and meetings
- Signposting of appraisal links to applications for UPS
- Deletion of teachers experiencing difficulties (this will naturally form part of the appraisal meetings or will fall under other procedures
- Deletion of link to Grievance procedure
- Clarification of appeals to Pay Policy.

Ratified by the Trust Board: July 2018

Next review & ratification: July 2019