



Beecroft Academy
(DRAFT) POLICY FOR APPRAISING TEACHER PERFORMANCE
2013-2014

PURPOSE

This procedure sets out how Beecroft Academy will improve outcomes for children, and raise the morale of teachers, by motivating teachers to up-date their skills and improve their performance.

The appraisal procedure will be used also to support improvement where underperformance is identified. If concerns are such that they cannot be resolved through the appraisal process, there will be consideration of whether to commence the capability procedure.

APPLICATION OF THE APPRAISAL POLICY

This policy applies to the Headteacher and to all qualified teachers employed at the School, except those on contracts of less than one term and those undergoing induction (*i.e.* NQTs) or teachers on capability procedures.

Appraisal in this School 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. It will help to ensure that teachers are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop as teachers.

THE APPRAISAL PERIOD

The appraisal period will run **for twelve months**, normally from September to July.

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

Where a teacher starts their employment at the School part-way through a cycle the Headteacher or, in the case where the employee is the Headteacher the governing body, 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 School part-way through a cycle the Headteacher or, in the case where the employee is the Headteacher the Governing Body, shall determine whether the cycle shall begin again and whether to change the appraiser.

APPOINTING APPRAISERS

All appraisers of teachers, other than those appraising Headteachers, will be teachers and will be suitably trained.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will be appraised by the Governing Body, supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Governing Body for that purpose.

The task of appraising the Headteacher, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group consisting of normally 2 to 3 members of the Governing Body.

Where a Headteacher is of the opinion that any of the governors appointed by the Governing Body is unsuitable to act as his/her appraiser, s/he may submit a written request for that governor to be replaced, stating the reasons for the request.

Teachers

The choice of appraiser is for the Headteacher. Where teachers have an objection to the Headteacher's choice their concerns will be carefully considered and, where possible, an alternative appraiser will be offered. All appraisers appointed by the Headteacher will be qualified teachers and will have current teaching experience.

Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser appointed by the Headteacher will be absent for the majority of the appraisal cycle, the Headteacher may perform those duties herself/himself or delegate those duties to another teacher for the duration of that absence.

If the Headteacher appoints an appraiser who is not the teacher's line manager, the appraiser to whom s/he delegates those duties will have an appropriate position in the staffing structure, together with the necessary background knowledge, skills and training to undertake the role.

Where a teacher is experiencing difficulties and the Headteacher is not the appraiser, the Headteacher may undertake the role of appraiser. See also section on Teachers Experiencing Difficulties.

SETTING OBJECTIVES

The Headteacher's objectives will be set by the appraisal sub-group of the Governing Body after consultation with the external adviser and the Headteacher.

Objectives will be set before or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period. The objectives set will be 'specific', 'measurable', 'achievable', 'realistic' and 'time-bound' and will be appropriate to the appraisee's role and level of experience. In setting the objectives, reviewers will have regard to what can reasonably be expected in the context of roles, responsibilities and experience, consistent with the school's strategy for achieving a work/life balance for all staff. Appraisees may at any point append their comments alongside their objectives.

The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change. The school operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisers are working to the same standards. Targets will be moderated across the school 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 Headteacher.

The agreed 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.

Setting more than four objectives or, for example using sub-targets, can lead to teachers experiencing unreasonable workload and pressure, making the objectives more difficult to achieve. Therefore, other than in exceptional circumstances, no teacher will be given more than four objectives. One of the objectives will be related to the quality of teaching and will be the same target for every teacher. On occasions, it will be necessary for an objective to span more than one appraisal cycle. This will be agreed between the appraisee and appraiser.

The objectives set for each teacher are intended to contribute to the School's plans for improving educational provision and performance, and improving the education of pupils at the school, and will take into account the professional aspirations of the teacher.

The appraiser will take into account the effects of an individual's circumstances, including any disability, when agreeing objectives. For example, this might include a reasonable adjustment to allow an individual slightly longer to complete a task than might otherwise be the case. When staff return from a period of extended absence, objectives may be adjusted to allow them to readjust to their working environment.

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. Teachers will be assessed against the appropriate set of standards contained in the document 'Teachers' Standards' published in July 2011. The Headteacher or Governing Body (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 body that are relevant to them. For QTLS holders, that may include the overarching professional standards for teachers in the lifelong learning sector, held by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service.

PAY PROGRESSION

Where teachers are eligible for pay progression, the recommendation made by the appraiser 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 Document and the relevant teacher standards.

The Governing Body has agreed the pay policy of the school 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. Further details can be obtained from the school's pay policy.

REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

Observation

The effective and efficient operation of the appraisal process requires lesson observation to be a confidential process of constructive engagement within an atmosphere of support and co-operation.

Accordingly, 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.

At least 5 working days' notice will be given with regards to the observation arrangements and verbal feedback provided at least by the end of the next school day when requested by the teacher and written feedback within 5 working days, unless circumstances make this impossible.

Classroom observation will be carried out by qualified teachers.

For the purposes of appraisal, teachers' performance will be observed on an appropriate and reasonable number of occasions and will, as far as possible, be agreed by the appraiser with the appraisee based on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the school. The number and duration of appraisal observations will be in accordance with the School's observation protocol (see appendix 1), which includes provision for exceptional circumstances where concerns have been raised about a teacher's performance, or where the teacher requests additional observation visits.

Headteachers or other leaders with responsibility for learning and teaching standards may 'drop in' or undertake other observations to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of 'drop in' or other observations, and the notice to be given, will vary depending on specific circumstances but will be in accordance with the School's observation protocol (see appendix 1).

For the purpose of professional development, feedback about lesson observations should be developmental, not simply a judgement using Ofsted grades.

This school will use the findings of each observation, including appraisal observations, for other management requirements (for example subject area reviews), thereby seeking to minimise the total number of occasions on which teachers are observed.

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

Development and Support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development (CPD). The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development, through peer observation for example. Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

The School's CPD programme will be informed by the training and development needs identified as part of the appraisal process. The Governing Body will ensure in the budget planning that, as far as possible, resources are made available in the school budget for appropriate training, and support agreed for appraisees, maintaining access on an equitable basis.

An account of the training and development needs of teachers form a part of the Headteacher's termly reports to the Governing Body about the operation of the appraisal process in the school.

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

- a) The training and support will help the School 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.

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 Body must consult the external adviser.

The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on - a written appraisal report. 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 responsibilities against their objectives and against the 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 recommendation on pay where that is relevant;
- A space for the teacher's own comments

A review meeting will take place to discuss the content of the report and any further action required and to inform objective setting for the next cycle. In some circumstances an interim review meeting may be appropriate.

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

TEACHERS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES

When dealing with a teacher experiencing difficulties, the objective is to provide support and guidance through the appraisal process in such a way that the teacher's performance improves and the problem is, therefore, resolved.

Where it is apparent that a teacher's personal circumstances are leading to difficulties at school, support will be offered as soon as possible, without waiting for the formal annual assessment.

If an appraiser identifies through the appraisal process or via other sources of information, for example parental complaints, that the difficulties experienced by a teacher are such that, if not rectified, could lead to capability procedures the appraiser, the headteacher or a member of the leadership team will, as part of the appraisal process, meet the teacher to:

- Give clear written feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- Give the teacher the opportunity to comment on and discuss the concerns;
- Give the teacher at least 5 working days' notice that a meeting will be held to discuss targets for improvement alongside a programme of support and inform the teacher that s/he has the right to be assisted by a representative of an independent trade union or work place colleague, and at any future meetings where capability will be discussed;
- In consultation with the teacher at the above meeting, an action plan with support will be established (for example coaching, training, in-class support, mentoring, structured observations, visits to other classes or schools or discussions with advisory teachers) that will help address those specific concerns;
- Make clear how progress will be monitored and when it will be reviewed;
- Explain the implications and process if no – or insufficient – improvement is made.

The teacher's progress will continue to be monitored as part of the appraisal process and a reasonable time given for the teacher's performance to improve. This will depend upon the circumstances, but will normally be for a period of 12 weeks, with appropriate support as agreed in the Action Plan, in order that the aim of recovering and improving performance can be achieved. During this monitoring period the teacher will be given regular feedback on progress and arrangements will be made to modify the support programme if appropriate.

If sufficient progress is made, such that the teacher is performing at a level that indicates there is no longer a need for capability procedures being invoked, the teacher should be informed of this at a formal meeting with the appraiser or Headteacher. Following this meeting the appraisal process will continue as normal.

If no, or insufficient, improvement has been made over this period, the teacher will be invited to a transition meeting to determine whether formal capability proceedings need to be commenced or the appraisal process remains in place. The teacher may be assisted by a trade union representative or work colleague and will have at least 5 working days' notice of the meeting.

Appeals

Appraisees have a right of appeal against any of the entries in the written appraisal report. Details of the appeals process are available from the Headteacher or from the Governing Body. Where the Headteacher has not been recommended for pay progression, s/he will be informed by the appropriate governor. The Headteacher will notify any teacher who has not been recommended for pay progression of the date when the governing body meets to consider pay recommendations, following which the teacher (and Headteacher when the head has not been recommend for pay progression) may exercise the right of appeal, assisted by a companion who may be a colleague, a trade union official or a trade union representative.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THIS POLICY

ACAS Code Of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

The conduct of the formal capability stage will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the ACAS Code of Practice.

Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

Sickness

If long term sickness absence appears to have been triggered by the commencement of monitoring or a formal capability procedure, the case will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Absence Policy and will normally be referred to the occupational health service to assess the member of staff's health and fitness for continued employment and the appropriateness or otherwise of continuing with monitoring or formal procedures. In some cases it may be appropriate for formal procedures to continue during a period of sickness absence. However, the views of the occupational health physician will always be taken into account before a decision is reached.

Grievances

Where a member of staff raises a grievance during the appraisal or capability process, the appraisal or capability process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and appraisal or capability cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Confidentiality & Professional Relationships

The appraisal and capability processes will be treated with confidentiality. Only the appraiser's line manager or, where s/he had more than one, each of his/her line managers will be provided with access to the appraisee's plan recorded in his/her statements. This will be done upon request and only where this is necessary to enable the line manager to discharge his/her line management responsibilities. Appraisees will be consulted on requests for access to statements in the context of this policy.

The process of gathering evidence for performance review will not compromise normal professional relationships between teachers. The governing body recognises that the reviewer will consult with, and seek to secure the agreement of, the reviewee before seeking information from other colleagues about the work of the reviewee.

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 system. The Headteacher or appropriate colleague might, for example, review all teachers' objectives and written appraisal records personally – to check consistency of approach and expectation between different appraisers. The Headteacher might also wish to be aware of any pay recommendations that have been made.

Appraisal for Non-Teaching Staff

Whilst this policy focus on the School's statutory duty to implement an appraisal procedure for teachers, it is fully understood by the staff and governors that this process is important for all members of the non-teaching staff as well in order that they are given the same opportunities to flourish within their role by accessing the appropriate continuing professional development opportunities. Therefore, at Beecroft Academy, appraisal opportunities will be offered to all staff in a similar way to that detailed above.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body and Headteacher will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the School's appraisal arrangements.

The Headteacher will provide the Governing Body with a written report on the operation of the School's appraisal and capability policies annually. The report will not identify any individual by name. Where appropriate, the report will include an assessment of the impact of these policies on:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Religion and Beliefs
- Age
- Part-time Status
- Maternity and Pregnancy

The Headteacher will report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination.

Retention

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

Review

The Governing Body will review and update the policy annually to ensure that it remains appropriate and relevant.

Adam Haywood (Headteacher)

October 2013

Beecroft Academy

Classroom Observation Protocol

Introduction

Classroom observation is one of a repertoire of strategies which help staff gather information about the core work of learning and teaching.

The staff and governors are committed to ensuring that observation is developmental and supportive and that those involved in the process will:

- Carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
- Evaluate objectively;
- Report accurately and fairly; and
- Respect the confidentiality of the information gained.

Aims

- To raise standards by improving the performance of individuals or groups as a result of effective observation and feedback.
- To give classroom staff the opportunity to reflect on, discuss and improve their practice.
- To share success and good practice.
- To address underperformance.
- To aid the professional development of classroom based staff and the appraisal process.
- To collect evidence to support self-evaluative judgements made by school leaders.

Observation for Appraisal Purposes

The arrangements for classroom and/or task observation will be included in the appraisal planning statement and will include:

- The amount of observation
- The primary purpose of the observation
- Aspects of the employee's performance which will be assessed
- When, during the appraisal cycle, the observation is likely to take place
- Who is likely to conduct the observation

Where evidence emerges about the appraisee's performance which gives rise to concern during the cycle, additional observations may be arranged in addition to those recorded at the beginning of the cycle. In keeping with the commitment to supportive and developmental classroom and task observation, those being observed will be notified in advance.

Classroom observations of teachers will only be undertaken by persons with 'qualified teacher status', who have had adequate preparation and the appropriate professional skills to undertake observation and to provide constructive oral and written feedback and support. Oral feedback will be given as soon as possible after any observation and no later than the end of the following working day. It will be given in a suitable, private environment. Written feedback will normally 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 taken. The written record of feedback also includes the date on which the observation took place and the lesson/task observed. The appraisee has the right to append written comments on the feedback document.

Observation for Monitoring and Evaluation Purposes

The Headteacher has a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained throughout the School.

While information gathered during the appraisal process may be used where appropriate, for a variety of purposes (including informing school self-evaluation and school improvement strategies) the Headteacher may determine that it is necessary to collect such evidence as their professional judgement dictates and this may include additional lesson observations. Monitoring may take a form that is not accurately described as a lesson observation, which is usually of teaching and learning. Instead, for example, it may have a focus on the standards attained by the children, the impact of programmes of study on learning or on pupil behaviour. The monitoring might, for example, involve work scrutiny, analysis of assessment results or an examination of lesson planning records. It may also be 'light touch' and relatively informal. Other forms of additional monitoring may include learning walks or 'drop in' visits to classes. Wherever possible notice will be given of additional observations but, depending on the particular circumstances, it may not be practicable to provide employees with specific advance notice of monitoring activities that are carried out for purposes other than appraisal. The number and duration of lesson observations and other monitoring activities will be for the Headteacher to determine as appropriate.

Learning Walks and 'Drop-Ins'

The Governing Body agrees that learning walks (including other short visits to classes, such as 'drop-ins') will only be carried out in accordance with this protocol. 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.

Information about learning walks:

- 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, in order that they can organise their classes accordingly
- 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)
- Learning walks will be conducted with minimum disruption to staff and pupils
- Learning walks will be undertaken in a supportive and professional manner
- A maximum of two colleagues will be involved in learning walks (when supply cover allows this to happen)
- Pupils will not be asked for their views of an individual teacher during learning walks
- Those staff whose classes or groups are visited will be given the opportunity to see any written records which have been made during the learning walk
- There shall be no evaluation of an individual teacher during a learning walk although an Ofsted grade may be given related to the focus of the learning walk
- Reviews of the operation of learning walks will be held with all staff

Governors' Visits

Individual Governors may need to visit classrooms to become familiar with school routines or to monitor specific aspects of the curriculum. Such visits will be by prior arrangement with the Headteacher.

Classroom Observation and Formal Capability Procedures

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.

Adam Haywood (Headteacher)
October 2013