Portesbery School Appraisal Policy (all staff)

Reviewed: **Autumn 2024**
Review period: **2 Yearly**
date: **Autumn 2026**

1. Scope, purpose and principles

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all staff and for supporting their development within the context of the school's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers and the role expectations of support staff.

Appraisal is a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all members of staff have or fully develop the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that all members of staff are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop as teachers.

The process will also provide a basis for an assessment of performance for pay purposes for all teachers. Any policy decisions will be in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and the school's pay policy.

This policy applies to all members of staff employed by the school, except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing an induction period (i.e. ECTs), or those who are the subject of a formal capability procedure.

The policy should always be applied in a way that is robust whilst minimising the impact on workload for support staff, teachers, line managers, headteachers and governing bodies.

In its oversight of the appraisal system, the governing body is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and to the prevailing legal framework applicable to all employers, including legislation on equality, employment protection and data protection.

2. The appraisal period

The appraisal period will run for twelve months from 1 September to 31 August, or as set out in the school's pay policy.

Employees 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 appraisal period will be determined by the duration of their contract and will take account of the length of the 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. All support staff will undertake a six-month probationary period that will support training and development.

3. Appointing appraisers

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 up to three members of the governing body.

The headteacher will decide who will appraise other teachers.

4. Setting Objectives

The setting and agreement of objectives, against which performance can be objectively measured, is fundamentally important to the effective operation of a performance management system that aims to link individual performance to pay progression.

The headteacher's objectives will be set by the governing body after consultation with the external adviser. The governing body will be mindful of its duty to have regard to the work-life balance of the headteacher in setting his/her objectives.

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' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) and will be appropriate to the individual's role and level of experience.

The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives should be revised if circumstances change, in consultation with the teacher.

The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the school's plans for improving the school's educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school, including, for example, the impact on pupil progress and wider outcomes for pupils, and the contribution to improvements in other areas such as pupil behaviour, lesson planning, and the wider contribution to the work of the school, in line with the school improvement plan. Objectives will be subject to moderation before they are finalised in accordance with the school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.

5. Reviewing Performance

All teachers will be assessed against the set of standards contained in the 2011 DfE Teachers' Standards. Members of support will be assessed against their job descriptions.

Classroom observation

This school 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 school improvement more generally and promote opportunities for sharing good practice and collaboration between teachers.

All observation will be carried out by individuals with QTS to protocols that are agreed with teaching staff, in a supportive fashion, and will not be designed to add to staff workload. the focus and timing of observations with teachers in advance.

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 school. Teachers can, however, expect to be formally observed by SLT on a minimum of 2 occasions in any appraisal cycle. This observation will be a developmental process where teachers can identify areas for concern in advance.

We use the precision coaching model, which focuses on modelling, practising and planning improvements within the coaching process. The observation time is shorter with more of an emphasis on the coaching following it. One skill is identified for development following a dialogue between the teacher and observer. Discussion is based on the skill to be developed and this is planned, modelled and practised in a 'feed-forward' model. The skills is followed up through additional short observations and discussions before moving onto another area of focus.

In addition to formal observation, head teachers 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.

If we have concerns about a particular teacher, then we would develop an action plan to support the teacher's rapid improvement. We would observe more frequently and SLT would be more involved in identifying specific objectives. The whole process would still be very supportive and developmental.

Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to determine decisions on pay progression and inform continuing professional development. The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all members of staff 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 individuals.

6. Feedback

Teachers and support 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 require further development. It is important that areas for improvement are not left until the formal appraisal meeting before being addressed.

Where there are concerns about any aspects of an employee's performance the appraiser will meet the appraisee formally to:

- give clear and explicit feedback to the employee about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;

- give the staff member the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- set clear objectives for required improvement;
- agree any support (such as work shadowing, 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. Where appropriate, revised objectives may be agreed and review arrangements agreed that allow sufficient time for improvement. Any such arrangements should reflect the seriousness of the concerns and it will be for the school to determine the amount of time allowed for improvement;
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made – e.g., impact on pay progression and potential move to formal capability.

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 though that process.

7. Evidence

The appraiser will agree with each appraisee, where possible, the evidence to be used for assessment at the end of the appraisal period, particularly where the teacher wishes that evidence to be taken into account for the purposes of an application to access the upper pay range. Evidence may vary according to the chosen objectives and any development focus, but as a general rule the range and level of evidence collected for appraisal and pay determination purposes will always be proportionate and minimise workload.

Evidence will include:

- Classroom observation
- Lesson plans
- Book scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Pupil progress data
- Pupil/parental views

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8. Transition to capability

If a staff member demonstrates serious underperformance, and has not responded to a reasonable period of informal individual support, the teacher will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure, and will be invited to a formal capability meeting. The capability procedures will be conducted as set out in the relevant school policy.

9. 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.

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 termly.

10. Appraisal report

The teacher will receive (and have the opportunity to comment on) as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period an appraisal report. In this school, teachers will receive their appraisal reports by 31 October.

The appraisal report will include:

• details of the employee's objectives for the appraisal period in question;

• an assessment of the appraisee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards or job description;

• an assessment of the appraisee's professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them;

• a recommendation on pay where that is relevant;

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

11. Confidentiality, quality control and retention

The appraisal process will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the school's data protection policy. Data collected by the school for this purpose will only be shared with relevant individuals in the context of managing his/her performance appraisal. Unauthorised access or disclosure may be considered a data breach.

Appraisal records will be stored and disposed of securely and retained in accordance with the school's retention and disposal policy. Whilst the retention of documents is not specifically covered by the regulations, the DfE's 2018 GDPR Toolkit for Schools suggests that annual appraisal and assessment documents should be retained for the current year + five years.

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 appraisal system will be quality controlled for effectiveness and for consistency of approach in relation to objective setting, assessment by appraisers, and pay recommendations. This will involve:

- SLT conducting a review of a sample of appraisal records.
- the moderation of pay recommendations by the Headteacher, to ensure consistency and alignment with the pay progression model adopted by the school in its pay policy;
- the school determining that appraisers will receive appraisal training and be familiar with the professional standards that apply to teachers;
- the governing body requiring that the headteacher submit an annual report on the overall operation of the appraisal process.