



Appraisal Policy

Committee	Trust Board
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Review Procedures

This Policy will be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary. Any amendments required to be made to the Policy as a result of a review will be presented to the Board of Trustees for acceptance.

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Part A – Policy

Introduction: Purpose of the Appraisal Procedure

At Inspira Academy Trust, we are committed to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning for all of our pupils. We believe everyone in our Trust has a role to play in the success, well-being and personal development of all pupils. We believe with a clear appraisal system, we will assist our staff to achieve our aim through clarity of their role and responsibilities, with clear expectations and encouragement to develop and reflect on their professional development. Ultimately, our commitment to the appraisal process will enable every member of staff at all levels across the Trust to reach their full potential.

To enhance Appraisal the Trust is committed to a 'Coaching into Appraisal' process which provides an opportunity for all staff to receive high quality coaching. Staff are matched to a trained coach that they can meet with through the year. All coaching is underpinned by an agreed protocol see appendix D.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Pay Policy, and it also explains the process for invoking the Capability Policy where there are serious concerns about an employee's performance that the appraisal procedure has been unable to address.

This procedure applies to employees at all levels with the exception of those who are employed on a fixed term basis for less than one year, and newly qualified teachers during their induction year. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment with the Trust and may be amended at any time (employees will be informed of any changes).

2. Scope of the Policy

This Policy and Procedure applies to all Employees of Inspira Academy Trust.

3. Adoption Arrangements and Date

This policy procedure was reviewed by the Trust Board of Inspira Academy Trust on 27th March 2023 and supersedes any previous Appraisal policy. This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board every two years or earlier if there is a need. This will involve consultation with the recognised unions.

4. Responsibilities of the Trust

- > To provide an effective appraisal process to ensure all Employees can have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively.
- > To help employees to improve their professional practice and develop in their careers.

- > To ensure Employees are set objectives which are reviewed at appropriate intervals and that suitable training/support is provided to assist the Employee to meet their objectives.
- > To ensure objectives have clear links to Trust Business Plan and/or School Improvement Plan so Employees are clear how their performance will impact on the children in the Trust's schools.
- > Provide access to clear and constructive feedback to the Employee on their performance, clarifying any areas of concern at the earliest opportunity and giving an opportunity to improve.

5. Responsibilities of the Employee

- > Attend and actively participate in all appraisal meetings.
- > Prepare for review meetings including gathering evidence of their performance, achievement of objectives and examples of how they have demonstrated the Trust values and how their performance has impacted on the children in the Trust's schools.
- > Take responsibility for their own development including completing any training arranged for them, making use of learning resources and informing their line manager if they require further support.
- > To fully engage in training opportunities, reflecting on how training opportunities have improved their performance.
- > To alert their line manager at the earliest opportunity to any difficulties they are experiencing meeting the expectations of the role and work positively to achieve the required performance standards.
- > Ensure they inform their line manager of any circumstances that may impact upon their performance.
- > Carry out their job to the standard that is expected of and required for the role and grade.

6. General Principles

Appraisal in this Trust will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all employees have the skills and support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will also help employees to improve their professional practice and to achieve their career aspirations.

The appraisal process will be managed sensitively and with confidentiality. However, this does not override the need for the Trust to quality-assure the operation and effectiveness of the appraisal system.

The Trust is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness. It will abide by all relevant equality legislation, including the duty to consider making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

We will implement our Appraisal procedures on the following arrangements:

- > 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 our 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.
- > Work – life balance: All staff are entitled to a satisfactory work – life balance and performance appraisal is an appropriate mechanism to facilitate this.
- > Pay and Rewards: Pay progression for staff should reflect their overall contribution to the school both as individuals and as team members.

7. Application of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff employed in the Trust with the exception of teachers undergoing their formal year of induction 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 ~~schools'~~ formal competency 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 degree of challenge in the process 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 contract.

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

Part B - Procedure

8. Policy Framework

8.1 General

Performance appraisal is a shared responsibility. The Trust Board has the strategic responsibility for establishing this policy, providing the Trust Leadership Team with the support to ensure it is fully implemented and ensuring the leadership team, receive appropriate performance appraisal in order to set the right framework and culture for all staff in the Trust.

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

The performance of all staff must be reviewed on an annual basis. Appraisal planning and reviews for all teachers in this Trust will be completed by 31st October, in any one academic year and by 31st December for Headteachers.

The appraisal period will run for twelve months from September to August. Employees who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance assessed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy, but the length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract.

New starters or those who changed roles during the pay cycle due to secondment or promotion will normally have a Total Contribution Assessment at the time the assessment is due.

The assessment may be deferred where there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about an employee's performance. If an assessment is deferred the school will ensure that an assessment is carried out at such time they judge there to be evidence available. This will usually be within 6 months from the date of the deferral. Any increase in pay will be backdated to 1st April.

All staff must have an up-to-date job description, and this will form the basis for discussion at the appraisal planning and review meeting. School based staff should have access to their School Improvement Plan for improvement and other relevant planning documents in good time for their appraisal meeting. Central staff should have access to the Trust Business Plan.

Where it appears that the Appraisee is either not meeting or partially meeting the relevant professional standards then the appraisal process 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 formal capability procedure. The appraisal process will be recommenced when the Appraisee's performance has reached the required standards.

8.2 Appointing Appraisers

In this Trust the Trust Board has delegated pay decisions for all Employees to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, a Committee of the Trust Board. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee includes the Chairs of the Local Governing Bodies.

The framework for pay decisions for Inspira Academy Trust is set out in the Trust's Pay Policy. Refer to Part B – Framework for Pay Decisions.

8.3 Setting Objectives

The objectives of the Trust's Leadership Team will be set by their appraisers after consultation with the external adviser.

All Appraisees must have performance objectives set as soon practicable after at the start of each appraisal period. For those support staff whose role has a less direct impact on teaching and learning, it may be possible and appropriate to set objectives prior to the start of the appraisal period. All objectives must be relevant to the Appraisee's role, responsibilities and take full account of their experience and career/professional aspirations. The number and nature of objectives must be reasonable and, if achieved will contribute positively to the education of children in the Trust and the implementation of any plan designed to improve the Trust's schools' educational provision and performance.

Normally an Appraisee would expect to have 3 objectives (whole school and/or Trust, team/department and professional development). Staff with a wider role across a school, including teachers with or without a TLR, members of the school leadership team (SLT) and headteachers, would normally expect to have one or additional objectives in the relevant area.

The objectives will be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Relevant and Time-bound) and will be appropriate to the employee's role and level of experience. The appraiser and employee will seek to agree the objectives, but if they cannot agree, the appraiser will determine the objectives. Objectives may be revised during the appraisal period if circumstances change. It will usually be appropriate to include a professional development objective. Meeting or nearly meeting challenging objectives is a good way to show the level of performance required for pay progression and will also assist career development.

When objectives are set, it should be made clear what the success criteria will be and how performance will be assessed: that is to say, how the appraiser will judge whether the objectives have been met. The objectives set for each employee will, if achieved, contribute to the School's plans for raising standards and improving the education provided to pupils.

The performance of support staff will be assessed using the criteria outlined in the Trust's Pay Policy.

Consideration must be given to ensure that the appraisal objectives can be used to secure good evidence for pay progression in line with the expectations in the Trust's Pay Policy.

8.4 The Appraisal Meeting

It is the responsibility of the Appraiser to arrange the meeting with their Appraisee at the beginning of the cycle. This should be arranged by mutual agreement and normally with at least five working days' notice. The Appraiser must prepare for the meeting and ensure all relevant information and evidence that will be used during the meeting has been shared with the Appraisee at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Appraisal meeting should provide a two-way discussion to:

- > Assess performance during the previous year against the Appraisee's role and responsibilities, including performance objectives and any relevant standards.
- > Agree expectations for the year ahead by reviewing job description and appropriate performance objectives.
- > Confirm timescales for achievement of the objectives and for provision of support, including development.
- > Ensure the Appraisee understands the performance criteria, including relevant pay progression criteria, relevant professional standards and any other appropriate evidence to be taken into account in appraising performance including potential barriers to success.
- > Discuss and agree appropriate monitoring arrangements and other support for the Appraisee, including classroom observations, if appropriate to the reviewee's role.
- > Agree any areas of relevant training and development and related actions.
- > Allow the Appraisee to raise any issues or concerns regarding their workload or work - life balance and potential barriers to success.

It is the Appraisee's responsibility to play an active role in their review. This includes preparing for the meeting by:

- > Reflecting on their performance over the past year including their performance against the relevant professional standards.
- > Considering how they have made a wider contribution to the school.
- > Identifying any relevant evidence of performance including wider contribution that the Appraisee wishes to be considered in the appraisal review, and
- > Identifying important areas of focus for the year ahead and some of their future development needs.

Self-review is an important means of preparing for an appraisal meeting. Prior to any appraisal all staff (whether support staff or teacher) are required to upload evidence to support what they have achieved in the year leading up

to their appraisal. This should include what has gone well and areas for improvement.

Appraisees should take the opportunity of coaching sessions to prepare for their appraisal review in meeting challenging objectives and identifying the relevant evidence of their achievements.

The appraisal forms are completed on BlueSky Education. Any comments, actions or targets are added on by the Appraiser, these can be approved by the Appraisee.

8.5 Annual Assessment

Each employee's performance will be formally assessed at or around the end of each appraisal period.

The Appraiser will invite the employee to an appraisal meeting, and both the Appraiser and the employee will be able to provide evidence as input to the discussion. Following the appraisal meeting the employee will receive be bale to view the outcome of their appraisal on BlueSky Education. This should include the following information:

- > Details of the employee's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- > Evidence of impact of the employee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards;
- > An assessment of the employee's continuing professional development needs and aspirations and any action that is recommended to progress them.

The Appraisee may identify specific additional evidence and request consideration for their pay progression. The assessment of performance and of training needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.

As outlined in the Pay Policy, the CEO will moderate all pay progression recommendations across the trust schools to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity is applied at all times.

The assessment of performance and an employee's professional development needs will inform the setting of objectives for the following appraisal period. Employees have a right of appeal against pay progression decisions, as set out in the Pay Policy.

8.6 Links with Pay

For more information regarding the following items refer to Part B – Framework for Pay Decisions of the Trust's Pay Policy.

- > Teacher annual pay reviews
- > Support staff annual pay reviews
- > Notification of pay determinations
- > Withholding Pay Progression

8.7 Training and Development

Performance appraisal is a developmental process and a key part of the planning discussion. It should be about the support that the Appraisee will need in order to meet identified objectives and performance criteria.

This Trust is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to a level of development appropriate to their role, stage of career development, performance objectives and criteria and individual aspirations.

The pay progression routes for all our staff is outlined in the Trust's Pay Policy.

Development and training identified from the appraisal process must be recorded using BlueSky Education. Any further training courses must be approved by the Headteacher to ensure this is in line with budgets. The Trust HR Officer is responsible for booking training for staff.

Appraisees can use coaching sessions to discuss and identify relevant training and development needs and opportunities. This Trust recognises that development and support may take a number of forms and a wide range of activities which may not necessarily involve a formal course.

8.8 Performance review and feedback

Employees 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 should acknowledge and praise areas of strength as well as highlighting any areas that need attention or where further support may be appropriate.

Performance should be informally reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year, as part of normal management practice. At least one formal interim review should also take place during the appraisal cycle, to assess performance against objectives and consider whether any changes need to be made.

8.9 Observations and other sources of evidence

The Trust believes that triangulation of evidence over time provides an accurate reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring can include but is not restricted to:

- > Learning walks
- > Book scrutiny

- > Pupil Voice
- > Data analysis

In addition to formal monitoring, the Headteacher or other senior leaders with responsibility for teaching standards may “drop in” on lessons in order to evaluate teaching and ensure that high professional standards are maintained. The duration and frequency of formal and “drop in” observations will vary depending on factors including the individual circumstances of the teacher, the needs of a particular class or subject area, and the overall objectives and priorities of the Trust.

If on occasion, the Headteacher has a cause for concern teachers may be observed formally. All formal classroom observations will be carried out by those with QTS and the teacher will be given at least two days’ notice of any formal observation.

Other employees who have responsibilities inside or outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities observed. Performance will also be assessed by reference to appropriate information sources (such as pupil achievement data) and other evidence relevant to the employee's job role, such as financial metrics or survey feedback.

9. Moderation

For more information regarding the responsibilities of our trust in regards to moderation of appraisals, refer to Appendix 1: Terms of References outlined in the Trust's Pay Policy.

10. Changes to Plans 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 Appraisee's circumstances, school priorities or local/national policy initiatives. In this event the Appraiser and Appraisee should discuss and ideally agree the necessary changes. Appraisees may use coaching sessions to discuss and identify any changes that may need to be made during the appraisal period.

If there is no agreement to the proposed changes then the Appraiser shall amend the appraisal plan with any changes he/she thinks ought to be made and pass the revised statement to the Appraisee who may add his/her comments.

11. Performance concerns and transition to capability

Where there are concerns about any aspects of an employee's performance, the appraiser or line manager will meet the member of staff to:

- > Give clear feedback about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;

- > Give the employee an opportunity to comment on and discuss the concerns; Decide what support can be provided to help the employee to address the concerns (such as coaching, mentoring, training or opportunities to observe Best practice);
- > Make clear how and when progress will be reviewed; and
- > Explain the implications if no (or insufficient) improvement is made.

This is not a formal meeting but the points above should be documented in writing after the meeting to provide clarity.

When progress is reviewed, if the appraiser or line manager is satisfied that the employee has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues being addressed through this process. If progress is not satisfactory, the employee will be notified in writing that their performance will now be managed under the Capability Procedure.

12. Confidentiality and Retention of Records

The performance appraisal process will be treated with full confidentiality at all times.

Records are held on BlueSky and are only visible to the individual employee, along with their line manager and headteacher of their school.

When an employee leaves the Trust, they are removed from the organisation on BlueSky, therefore their records are no longer visible to anyone in our organisation. However, the Trust will retain records for a suitable relevant period for the purposes of determining pay progression, providing references and complying with legal duties such as Inland Revenue. The Trust may request a copy of a new employee's most recent appraisal record from their previous employer as evidence towards their pay progression. The Trust may agree to provide a future employer with an employee's most recent appraisal record but only with express written consent from the individual concerned.

13. Communication of this Policy

A copy of this policy will be held on the OneDrive accessible to all staff within our schools to ensure that all staff can have access to a copy of it as needed. All new staff joining the school will be provided with a login for BlueSky and information on how to use the system in the Trust's induction pack.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust Board and the CEO will monitor the operation and outcomes of the performance appraisal arrangements.