



Teacher Appraisal Policy 2025-26



The Stour Federation

1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, including the CEO, Trust SENDCO and Headteachers, 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.

Appraisal in The Stour Federation 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 Trust Board and Local Academy Councils (LAC) are committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness in appraising teacher performance and will abide by all relevant equality legislation.

This policy is based on the DfE teacher appraisal and capability model policy for schools (March 2019, updated July 2024) and was consulted on and agreed for use by sending the policy to union representatives in summer 2023).

Additional information in this policy was sent to unions, with one comment received in favour of Growing Great People and no other comments received.

This policy must be read alongside The Stour Federation's document 'Growing Great People' - our policy for professional growth.

2. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This Policy applies to Trust and school leaders and all teachers employed by The Stour Federation except:

- Teachers on contracts of less than one term.
- Those undergoing statutory induction (i.e. ECTs) or
- Those who are the subject of capability procedures.

It should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Pay Policy, which provides details of the arrangements relating to teacher's pay, the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and the Education (School Teachers Appraisal (England)) Regulations 2012.

This policy does not apply to non-teaching staff in schools. Non-teaching staff appraisal policies are in place through 'Growing Great People' - our policy for professional growth.

Appraisals and performance management for support staff should be carried out in accordance with the employee's contract of employment.

3. THE APPRAISAL PERIOD

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

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 and an individual teacher's objectives should take account of the length of contract.

Teachers will have their Growing Great People growth projects and professional standards acknowledged by 31st October (31st December for the CEO, Trust SENDCO, Headteachers and Heads of School), unless the practicalities of the performance management process make this difficult to achieve, in which case it will be issued as soon as possible after this date and in any event all written appraisals will be issued by 31st December at the latest.

Where a teacher begins or ends employment with the school during the appraisal period, a longer or shorter appraisal period may be applied, e.g. a two-term appraisal period for teachers who start with the school on 1st January.

4. APPOINTMENT OF APPRAISERS

The CEO and Trust SENDCO will be appraised by directors from the Trust Board. Headteachers will be appraised by governors from the LAC and a Trust Board Director. These appraisals will be supported by a suitably skilled and experienced external adviser who has been appointed by the Trust Board or LAC for that purpose. The CEO will be involved in the appraisal of Headteachers.

Where the Trust Leaders and Headteachers are of the opinion that any of the governors appointed under this regulation is unsuitable for professional reasons, they may submit a written request to the Chair for that governor to be replaced, stating those reasons. Where possible a suitable alternative appraiser will be offered.

The Headteacher will decide who will appraise other teachers. All appraisers will have qualified teacher status and relevant experience. If the Headteacher appoints an appraiser who is not the teacher's line manager, the appraiser to whom they delegate 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 has more than one line manager the Headteacher will determine which line manager will be best placed to manage and appraise the teacher's performance.

Where a teacher is of the opinion that the person to whom the Headteacher has delegated the appraiser's duties is unsuitable for professional reasons, their concerns will be carefully considered and, where possible, a suitable alternative appraiser will be offered.

Where it becomes apparent that the appraiser will be absent for the majority of the cycle or is unsuitable for professional reasons, the Headteacher may perform the duties themselves or delegate the appraiser's role to another teacher. Where this teacher is not the appraisee's line manager, the teacher will have an equivalent or higher status in the staffing structure as the teacher's line manager.

An appraisal period will not begin again in the event of the appraiser being changed.

All appraisers will be appropriately trained in appraisal procedures and confidentiality. School leaders and other appraisers should use their professional judgement when appraising teachers' performance. Teachers are not expected routinely to provide evidence that they meet all the standards.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Trust Board and LACs will each nominate a governor, who will not be involved in the appraisal of the CEO and Headteachers respectively, or any appeal relating to it, to ensure that the Professional Growth Plans of school leaders are consistent with the Trust's strategic objectives, individual school improvement plans and comply with The Stour Federation's Teacher Appraisal Policy and the Regulations.

The Stour Federation operates a system of moderation to ensure that all appraisers are working to the same standards. Professional Growth Plans will be moderated across the Trust to ensure that they are consistent between teachers with similar experience and levels of responsibility and meet the requirements stated in section 7.

The Trust Board and LACs for each school will review the quality assurance processes when this policy is reviewed.

6. PAY PROGRESSION FOR TEACHERS

An unsuccessful pay progression (performance award) will not necessarily mean a teacher is in formal capability proceedings; a teacher may just not have satisfied their overall Professional Growth Plan or Teachers' Standards to a sufficient standard. Where a teacher is in formal capability proceedings, the Appraisal process ceases and pay progression cannot be awarded.

The Trust Board will ensure that decisions on pay progression are made by 31st December for Headteachers and 31st October for teachers, unless the practicalities of the performance management process make this difficult to achieve, in which case, decisions will be made by 31st December at the latest.

As long as our staff continue to meet the appropriate professional standards and engage in the process of professional growth, pay progression will be automatic and not linked to any mechanism of traditional 'performance management'.

We expect our staff to progress up the pay scale as the norm.

Upper Pay Scale

To apply for progression onto the Upper Pay Scale (UPS) a teacher must, in the light of his/her appraisal review which is likely to support that progression on the basis of the criteria above, formally tell the Headteacher in writing, that they wish their appraisal review to be used as evidence for progression onto the UPS no later than 31st October. In addition, they must provide evidence of the quality of teaching, pupil achievement and wider contribution to the school that they wish to be considered.

A teacher will be eligible for progression to UPS2 and UPS3 after two years on UPS1 or UPS2 respectively, providing that their professional standards and growth projects indicates that they are sustaining and developing their 'consistently Good or increasingly Outstanding teaching', high levels of pupil achievement and significant wider achievement to the school, including through mentoring, coaching or support. Teachers must also formally tell the Headteacher in writing, that they wish their appraisal review to be considered as evidence for this progression no later than 31st October. The Headteacher will use information from growth projects and other performance indications aligned to professional standards to make a decision.

We believe the following differentiated scales offer teachers clear guidance during the application process:

- **UPS1: "Sustained"**: the teacher must have had two consecutive successful appraisals in this school and have made good progress towards their growth projects during this period. They will have been expected to have shown that their teaching expertise has grown over the relevant period and is consistently good to outstanding.
- **UPS2 'Substantial'**: the teacher's achievements and contribution to the school are significant, not just in raising standards of teaching and learning in their classroom, or with their groups of children, but also in making a considerable wider contribution to school improvement, which impacts on pupils' progress and the effectiveness of staff and colleagues.
- **UPS3 'Highly competent'**: the teacher's performance is assessed as having excellent depth and breadth of knowledge, skill and understanding of the Teachers' Standards in the particular role they are fulfilling and the context in which they are working. They act as role models for teaching and learning and continue to develop their expertise post threshold.

7. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

Instead of the traditional performance management process, teachers and school leaders will follow ***Growing Great People - Our Policy for Professional Growth***.

All teachers holding QTS status must be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called "Teachers' Standards" published in July 2011 (updated in July 2021)). For qualified teachers holding Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, the CEO will need to consider whether they should be assessed against the Teachers' Standards or assessed against other sets of standards published by the Secretary of State that are relevant to them.

Teachers' performance will be assessed against the relevant teacher standards to a level that is consistent with what should be reasonably expected of a teacher in the relevant role and at the stage of their career.

In addition to the professional standards, the growth plan for each teacher will, if achieved, contribute to the school's plans for improving the educational provision and performance. The growth plan should have a strong focus on effective professional development to ensure that

teachers stay up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies, and educational research.

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The Stour Federation wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development linked to Trust and school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

Teachers will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after learning explorations have 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.

Each teacher's performance will be assessed in respect of each appraisal period.

8. ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Each teacher's performance will be assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the Headteacher/CEO, the Local Academy Council/Trust Board 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 check-ins which will take place (e.g. once a term).

The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period – and have the opportunity to comment on – an appraisal report. The appraisal report will include:

- Details of the teacher's satisfactory completion of their growth project for the appraisal period in question based on their role and stage of career.
- An assessment of the teacher's performance of their role and responsibilities against the relevant standards.
- The opportunity for the teacher to comment on their future professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them.
- Details of a discussion on wellbeing and workload and career progression/aspirations.
- A recommendation on pay where that is relevant.

9. 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. Where the teacher has not been recommended for pay progression, they 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 Pay Committee meets to consider pay recommendations, following which the teacher (and CEO when a Headteacher has not been recommended for pay progression)

may exercise the right of appeal, assisted by a companion who may be a colleague, trade union official or trade union representative.

10. INFORMAL SUPPORT

Except in the most serious cases of persistent failures to meet job expectations and teaching standards, resulting in negative consequences on the pupils and organisation, teachers should not ordinarily be placed in capability procedures without first undergoing a period of informal support as part of the appraisal process. Where there are concerns about any aspects of the teacher's performance the appraiser will meet the teacher to:

- Inform the teacher that they are going to be receiving informal support due to performance concerns.
- Give clear and specific feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns.
- Give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns.
- Set clear objectives and timescales for required improvement.
- Agree any support (e.g. 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 (it may be appropriate to revise objectives, and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time is up to the school but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns).
- Explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made – e.g. commencement of capability procedure.

There should be a clear relationship between the issue, the objectives set, and the planned documented programme of support put in place. The line manager/appraiser should partner with the teacher in a collaborative manner to establish objectives and timelines, taking into account the teacher's circumstances. This may include any medical conditions, well-being support needs, or disabilities protected by equality legislation.

Informal support should be provided for a reasonable period to allow for performance improvement. Schools could decide this is a minimum of 6 weeks. However, the duration will be determined based on the specific circumstances, with appropriate support in place to facilitate improvement. The appraiser should meet with the teacher regularly to assess progress and ensure the agreed-upon support is being provided.

When progress is reviewed, after the agreed upon period, if the appraiser is satisfied that the teacher 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.

11. TRANSITION TO CAPABILITY

If a teacher demonstrates serious underperformance or has not responded to support provided within the informal support process, 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. Advice should be sought as appropriate from a HR provider.

Disciplinary procedures will only be triggered by factors related to misconduct or breach of professional standards. Schools should be careful not to conflate these procedures but, if appropriate to the circumstances, they can run concurrently.

12. RETENTION OF APPRAISAL RECORDS

The Trust Board and CEO will ensure that all written appraisal records (including professional growth plans and self-reflections are retained in a secure place for six years and then destroyed.

13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Trust Board will monitor the operation and outcomes of appraisal arrangements. The CEO will provide the Trust Board with an annual report on the operation of the arrangements, to include:

- The operation of the appraisal policy.
- The effectiveness of the school's appraisal procedures.
- Teachers' training and development needs.

The report will not contain any information which would enable any individual to be identified.

The Trust Board is committed to ensuring that the appraisal process is fair and non-discriminatory and the following monitoring data should be included in the CEO's report because they represent the possible grounds for unlawful discrimination:

- Race
- Sex
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Religion and belief
- Age
- Part-time contracts
- Trade union membership.

The CEO will also report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination under any of the categories above.

14. REVIEW OF POLICY

The Trust Board will review the appraisal policy annually and will take account of the CEO's report in the review. The policy will be revised as required to introduce any changes in regulation and statutory guidance to ensure that it is always up to date.

The Trust Board will seek to agree any revisions to the policy with the recognised trade unions having regard to the results of the consultation with all teachers.

To ensure teachers are fully conversant with the appraisal arrangements, all new teachers who join the school will be briefed on them as part of their introduction to the school.

15. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION

All teachers will be provided with access to the Trust's 2030 Strategy and individual school improvement plans.

16. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality underpins the appraisal process. However, there may be a need to share some details with governors and other key members of staff for a variety of reasons, including:

- Planning continuing professional development.
- Quality assurance.
- Pay recommendations.
- Making efficient use of aggregated lesson observation information for a variety of school leadership purposes.

In addition, Ofsted may investigate the effectiveness of the appraisal policy and process. In so doing, however, the confidentiality of the process for individuals will not be compromised.

In so far as possible, information will be anonymised.

17. ABSENCE

If a member of staff is on long-term absence (e.g. long term sickness, maternity, parental, unpaid leave, secondment etc), it may be appropriate for the appraiser to review and re-focus objectives with the appraisee. Any sickness absence will be managed in accordance with the sickness absence management procedure.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL FOR MEETING THE TEACHERS' STANDARDS

Introduction:

The Trust Board is committed to ensuring that classroom 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.
- Respect the confidentiality of the information gained.
- Focus on improving pedagogy.

The CEO, Headteachers and senior leaders have a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained.

Observations enable the appraiser to assess a teacher's classroom and teaching practice against the teaching standards and to assess the teacher's progress in relation to agreed objectives. The amount and type of classroom observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the school but should reflect and be proportionate to the needs of the individual. They usually take place using Pupil Book Study, an evidence-informed approach triangulating work in books, observing teaching and learning in the classroom and pupil voice.

Information gathered during observations can be used, as appropriate, for other purposes, such as subject area reviews, informing school self-evaluation and school improvement strategies, thereby seeking to minimise the total number of observations of a teacher.

Arrangements for observations

Observations should be proportionate to the needs of the individual in order to support the achievement of their objectives and other performance criteria, such as standards of teaching, and should reflect their individual circumstances.

There may be circumstances justifying or requiring additional observation, for example, where the appraisee requests additional observations or where concerns have been raised about a teacher's performance.

Observations will take place throughout the year. The focus of and arrangements for observations will normally be established at the planning meeting between the teacher and appraiser and will be included in the planning statement. They will be reviewed as necessary at any feedback or subsequent review meeting.

In keeping with the commitment to be supportive and developmental, classroom observations will be notified in advance.

Trust and School Leaders should ensure that those who undertake observations have had adequate preparation and have the appropriate professional skills to undertake observation and to provide constructive oral and written feedback and support, in the context of professional dialogue between colleagues.

Feedback:

Feedback about lesson observations must be developmental.

Oral feedback will be given as soon as possible after the observation and no later than the end of the following working day. It will be given during directed time in a suitable, private environment.

Written feedback will be provided within five working days of the observation taking place, unless circumstances make this impossible. This should include the date on which the observation took place, the lesson and length of lesson observed, feedback and any subsequent follow-up work/actions. The teacher has the right to append written comments on the feedback document.

If issues emerged from an observation that were not part of the original focus of the observation, these should also be covered in the written feedback and the appropriate action taken in accordance with the regulations and guidance.

No written notes in addition to the written feedback will be kept.

Drop-ins:

Trust and School Leaders (or other leaders with responsibilities for teaching standards) have the right to “drop in” and to undertake other forms of monitoring , such as learning walks, to inform his/her monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and to collect evidence of progress and areas for school development/improvement. They do not, of themselves, form part of the formal appraisal process of individuals.



Growing Great People Teacher Appraisal Assessment Report 2025-26

Name of Teacher: XXX

Current Scale Point: XXX

Growth Plan Title: XXX

Appraiser: XXX

● = fully met

● = partially met

● = not met

Teachers' Standards Criteria	RAG
The teacher sets high expectations, which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils.	
The teacher promotes good progress and outcomes for pupils.	
The teacher demonstrates good subject and curriculum knowledge.	
The teacher plans and teaches well-structured and inclusive lessons.	
The teacher adapts their lessons to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils.	
The teacher uses assessments accurately and productively.	
The teacher manages behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.	
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UPS Standards	RAG
UPS1: "Sustained": the teacher must have had two consecutive successful appraisals in this school and have made good progress towards their growth projects during this period. They will have been expected to have shown that their teaching expertise has grown over the relevant period and is consistently good to outstanding.	
UPS2 'Substantial': the teacher's achievements and contribution to the school are significant, not just in raising standards of teaching and learning in their classroom, or with their groups of children, but also in making a considerable wider contribution to school improvement, which impacts on pupils' progress and the effectiveness of staff and colleagues.	
UPS3 'Highly competent': the teacher's performance is assessed as having excellent depth and breadth of knowledge, skill and understanding of the Teachers' Standards in the particular role they are fulfilling and the context in	

which they are working. They act as role models for teaching and learning and continue to develop their expertise post threshold.	
Comments:	

Teaching and Learning Responsibility	RAG
TLR payments are awarded to classroom teachers for undertaking a sustained additional responsibility that aims to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality teaching and learning, and for which the teacher is made accountable. This means they will be held to account for the performance, delivery, and outcomes related to that responsibility.	
Results:	
Comments:	

Future Development Needs	Actions to be taken	Deadline for completion

Well-being, Workload and Attendance	Career Aspirations	Pay Progression

Employee signature	
Reviewer's signature	
Date	