

**Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools  
Appraisal Process for Support Staff: Management Guidance  
2021-22**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1** This guidance is intended to assist managers and staff in the application of an appraisal process for support staff and to facilitate its consistent application across the school.
- 1.2** This guidance sets out to align school, team and individual objectives to ensure that all employees are working towards the right goals.

When applied effectively appraisal is a powerful tool to help motivate, manage, support and develop staff towards the delivery of key outcomes.

- 1.3** This appraisal guidance provides a framework within which managers can:
- Help jobholders to understand their roles and what is expected of them
  - Give regular, objective and constructive feedback on performance
  - Acknowledge the achievements, strengths and skills of the jobholder
  - Identify development needs and support jobholders in enhancing their skills and performance
  - Provide an opportunity to discuss the jobholder's potential and options for career development
- 1.4** The guidance does not replace day-to-day support and guidance from managers, which is a necessary component of effective performance management. Rather it provides a structure within which managers and staff are encouraged to reflect on current performance and how it supports the delivery of agreed plans. This takes place:
- At the annual performance discussion
  - At the mid-year review meeting
  - At regular one-to-one meetings held throughout the year
- 1.5** All community and voluntary controlled schools are required, under the employment based cost review collective agreement, to have an appraisal scheme that includes objectives and an annual assessment against a four point scale. Only those members of staff achieving an overall outcome of excellent will be awarded an increment provided there is room for progression within their incremental scale.
- 1.6** Provided the requirements of 1.5 are met, schools may select an appraisal scheme that is appropriate for their circumstances, and this can include an assessment against competencies. Croydon Council has made available two appraisal schemes to schools – The Performance, Development and Competency Scheme (PDCS) and “Our Appraisal”

## 2. Scope

- 2.1** The guidance applies to all permanent and fixed term staff except teachers. Where an alternative process is used for these staff it should as a minimum contain:
- Objectives
  - Provision through ratings for identifying poor performance and performance which consistently exceeds expectations
- 2.2** Interim and agency will not normally be managed through appraisal. Objective setting and performance management for these staff will usually be different, owing to their particular employment relationship with the school. However, some principles still apply as they reflect effective management practices; for example:
- Setting clear targets and goals
  - Monitoring individual performance
  - Giving feedback on performance
  - Addressing underperformance

Staff on probation will be managed through the probation procedure, switching to appraisal on successful completion of their probation period.

The period spent in probation before confirmation in post is considered to be part of the 'performance year'.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1** Managing individual performance is the responsibility of both the jobholder and the manager. Doing this effectively is crucial to the delivery of objectives at team and school levels.
- 3.2** **The jobholder** is expected to:
- Take responsibility for his/her own performance and for meeting agreed objectives and standards
  - Evaluate his/her own level of performance and be active in addressing any areas of underperformance
  - Prepare for and participate fully in one-to-ones, mid-year reviews and annual performance discussions; provide examples and evidence of his/her performance
  - Reflect on his/her strengths and weaknesses; contribute ideas about his/her learning and development
  - Participate in learning and development activities from objective setting to application and evaluation of the learning
- 3.3** **The manager** is expected to
- Agree objectives with the jobholder which support the delivery of team and school development / improvement plans

- Regularly review the jobholder's performance and development, giving regular feedback as part of the appraisal process which is consistent with the jobholder's level of performance and with the overall rating applied
- Tackle underperformance at the point it occurs, putting in place the support and development needed to bring performance back to the required standard
- Ensure that the scheme is applied consistently and fairly
- Use judgment and discretion in applying the principles of the process in ways that best meet both individual and service needs
- Make appraisal records available as required to inform team and school planning and monitoring
- Inform your HR provider in good time where an overall rating of 'unsatisfactory' may be given
- Seek approval from his/her own line manager and headteacher where an overall rating of 'excellent' may be given

**3.4 The reviewing manager** is expected to:

- Agree consistent standards of performance across teams and highlight school priorities to managers
- Seek updates from managers about the performance and progress of team members.
- Ensure the process is applied in a fair and consistent manner
- Confirm at the end of the year that the appraisal process has been applied appropriately and in line with guidance
- Ensure that the ratings given are fair and reflect the jobholder's actual level of performance.

**3.5 Headteachers** are expected to:

- Define departmental targets and objectives through the school improvement planning process; make plans available to managers and staff in order to support the setting of individual objectives
- Communicate standards relating to the application of appraisal
- Put in place processes for monitoring the application of the appraisal process, including completion of appraisals, the distribution of ratings, quality of appraisals and impact on equality and diversity issues
- Meet with the school moderation panel as required to endorse the rating of a jobholder's overall performance as 'excellent'

**3.6 Governing Bodies** are expected to:

- Ensure that the appraisal process is operating effectively in the school
- Set up a moderation panel of 3 governors to review excellent ratings
- Ensure the panel meets during June every year
- Ensure the moderation panel notifies the pay committee of any outcomes from appraisal that result in an increment

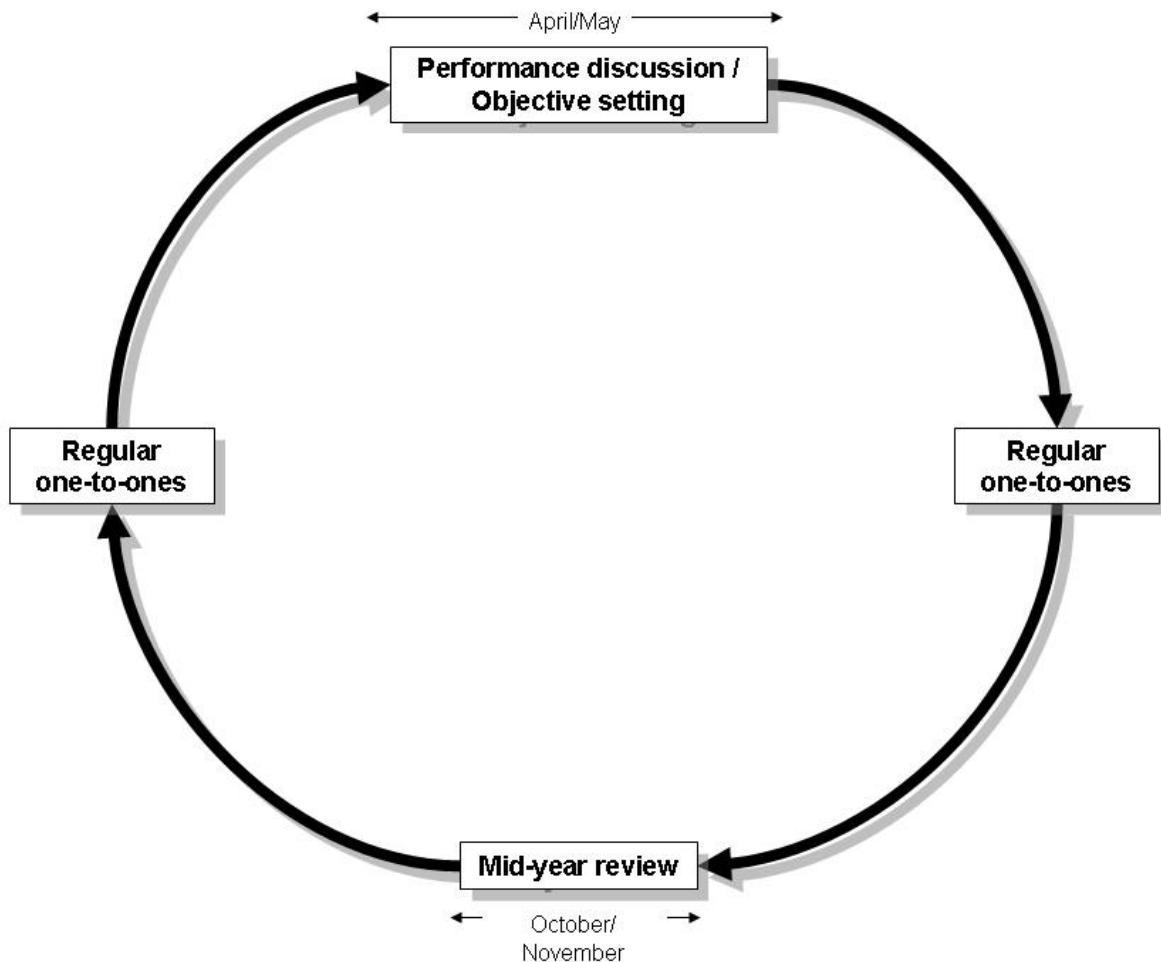
## 4. Overview and timetable

- 4.1 The **performance year** usually runs from 1 April to 31 March in line with the financial year. In 2021-22 the year will run from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022, due to the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic.
- 4.2 All staff covered by the process should agree objectives for the year ahead at a one-to-one meeting, which should take place no later than 31 December. Where a member of staff takes on a role after this date, objectives should be agreed as soon as is practicable.
- 4.3 This meeting should also include a discussion of learning and development needs and an initial learning and development plan should also be produced
- 4.4 There is no hard and fast rule as to how frequently one-to-one meetings should take place. However, it is recommended that these be held every half term so that appropriate interventions can be made if necessary and also so that feedback is timely and meaningful.
- 4.5 There may be occasions when the timetable for meetings needs to be adjusted in response to particular circumstances, for example as a consequence of sickness absence. Where this is the case a new meeting should be planned as soon as is practicable.
- 4.6 At the mid-year point (usually in April or May) a more detailed one-to-one review should take place in order to take stock of progress and to discuss projected ratings if this has not yet been done, in order that the jobholder has sufficient opportunity to adjust his/her approach if required. A mid-year review form should be completed by the line manager at this point and shared with the jobholder.
- 4.7 At the close of the performance year the line manager will arrange to meet with the jobholder for an end-of-year performance discussion. At this meeting a discussion should take place about performance across the previous year and ratings should be ascribed to objectives as well as an overall rating for the year as a whole. An appraisal form should be completed and sent to the reviewing manager for approval.

The performance discussion should take place in time for completed forms to be received by the headteacher by 31 December

- 4.8 Although the performance year is aligned to the financial year not all objectives will be set with the intention of completion within the performance year. Some may require a longer time span, in which case the record of objectives should show the milestones towards that objective to be achieved in the current cycle.

## 4.9 The appraisal process cycle



## 5. Objectives

- 5.1** The scheme is based on managers assessing a jobholder's performance against individual objectives.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development describe an objective as:

“Something to be accomplished by individuals... over a period of time.”

Objectives can be expressed as targets (e.g. 'increase payment through direct debit by 20%'), tasks to be completed (e.g. 'update intranet content relating to Options staff benefit scheme').

Sometimes objectives focus on performance standards. In particular this applies where the objective is a continuous feature of the role and does not change significantly over time. Where possible, quantitative indicators should be used to define these standards, e.g. 'process applications within 2 days of receipt'.

Objectives and standards should be SMART

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-related

Objectives should be subject to continuous review and should be amended as necessary in response to changing circumstances (see paragraph 7.4: Identifying factors that may affect performance)

## **6. The performance discussion**

### **6.1 Prior to the performance discussion:**

Ensure that the basics are in place:

- Make sure the venue and time is appropriate
- Leave adequate time for the discussion
- Avoid interruptions
- Give the jobholder sufficient notice of time and place
- Draw together and review relevant information, e.g. performance objectives set, the competency framework, notes made at one to one meetings and mid-year review, department / team business plans and priorities, learning and development records
- Discuss the feedback and ratings you intend to give with the reviewing manager and ensure that there is agreement

Actively encourage the jobholder to fully prepare for the performance discussion, and to bring with them:

- Evidence he or she believes will help in the interview discussions regarding performance
- Specific examples that illustrate the extent to which they have achieved their job objectives
- His or her personal development plan, learning log or similar documentation
- Any other paperwork they consider to be relevant

### **6.2 At the performance discussion:**

The performance discussion should cover the following areas:

- Evaluation of performance against objectives
- Setting objectives and performance standards for the coming year
- Career development and opportunities
- Learning and development planning and evaluation

A successful performance discussion is based on sound evidence compiled at one-to-ones across the year.

### **6.3 After the performance discussion:**

Following the performance discussion the manager should:

- Complete the final appraisal form for the year which is ending, including feedback and ratings on performance
- Open a new appraisal form for the coming year, including clear objectives and a development plan
- Ensure that a copy of both documents is given to the jobholder and a further copy sent to the reviewing manager for approval

## **7. Monitoring performance**

**7.1** Managers should develop a good understanding of what individual roles involve and what is expected of the jobholder. This includes:

- The purpose of the job and how it contributes to team performance
- The key skills and standards required for effective performance, i.e. school and professional standards and behaviours
- What constitutes excellent performance and underperformance in the job

Managers also need to ensure that all of the above have been effectively communicated to the jobholder.

### **7.2 Self assessment**

The jobholder should be actively encouraged to assess his/her own performance. This can help in developing self awareness and a sense of personal responsibility. The jobholder's self assessment will give the manager another perspective on performance and may even cause the manager to modify his/her judgement.

### **7.3 Gathering quality evidence**

Both the manager and the jobholder are responsible for gathering evidence of performance, which will be discussed at one-to-ones, mid-year reviews and performance discussions.

Evidence of performance can include written work such as plans, reports, work samples or minutes of meetings, budget records, evidence of pupil progress, teaching materials

However, evidence can also come in the form of verbal feedback received from colleagues and customers, a supervisory note, observation by the manager (including formal lesson observations) or simply a narrative account of performance supported with relevant evidence.



If evidence gathered consists of feedback from customers and colleagues who experience the individual's performance directly, the manager should be open with the jobholder as to why and how this will be gathered.

Discussions about evidence should focus on what was observed, how it was verified and the specific facts, actions, events, behaviours, results and the impact of the work.

When agreeing objectives managers and jobholders should also agree the indicators of performance, how evidence will be gathered and who will gather it.

#### **7.4 Identifying factors that may affect performance**

When assessing someone's performance it is important to consider the context. For example, consideration should be given to any barriers and difficulties that may have influenced performance during the year. Where barriers exist, the manager and jobholder may agree to amend or remove objectives as the year progresses.

If the barrier only becomes apparent at the time of rating performance the manager should consider whether to remove the objective from the appraisal (for example, in cases where work towards an objective was not started due to a change in circumstance), or should rate the performance that was demonstrated up to the point of the change (for example where a project was halted after significant work from the individual). In these cases it may be possible therefore for a jobholder to receive a high rating for an objective that was not delivered as originally agreed).

That said, managers should be careful to avoid:

- Using the removal or amendment of an objective to disguise underperformance
- Downgrading expectations to meet the level of actual performance
- Assuming that just because barriers exist they must be insurmountable. It is worth considering how the jobholder responded to the difficulties in their way – could they have adjusted their approach?

### **8. Rating performance fairly**

#### **8.1 Examining the evidence and exercising judgement**

Managers should consider evidence of actual performance and behaviour in light of standards for performance and behaviour for the job, the role description, and individual agreed objectives.

They should also take into account any factors outside the jobholder's control which may have helped or hindered the employee's progress throughout the year.

#### **8.2** Despite the importance of hard evidence, assessing performance inevitably entails the exercise of personal judgement and there are a number of pitfalls that need to be avoided.

The most common are:

- Prejudice for or against the jobholder
- Over-emphasising recent events, which can distort the picture of the year as a whole
- Lack of confidence in your own judgement which can lead to most staff being appraised as 'average' performers
- Comparing jobholders' performance against one another instead of against the requirements of the job

**8.3** It is the manager's responsibility to assess and rate the individual's overall performance fairly against the targets, objectives and performance expectations which have been set, and to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination.

It is the reviewing manager's job to ensure that the process is applied to the standards outlined above.

**8.4** Discrimination is not necessarily the consequence of a deliberate or planned act. Managers should consider the factors that might effect their judgement and guard against those which might cause unfairness. For example:

- The Halo and Horns effect - reacting favourably or unfavourably to one aspect of a person, and then using this to form an overall judgement about them
- Stereotyping - pre-judging someone on the basis that they are like someone you know and assuming, on that basis, that you know how they will perform in the future
- Similarity – the tendency by most people to like people who are like themselves and, accordingly, to rate them higher

**8.5** Assessment of performance should be made based on evidence that is relevant to the performance criteria. It should be justifiable through reference to that objective evidence. Evidence-based judgement is not the same as a subjective opinion and you need to be aware of and avoid basing your assessments on:

- Your response to an individual's personality or work style
- Your assumptions about what their behaviour means
- Your interpretation of their motives
- Expectations that have not been communicated to the member of staff.

**8.6** Reviewing managers should ensure that:

- Reviews and recommendations are based on objective evidence of overall performance
- The whole year has been taken into account, and not just recent events or high profile one-off achievements
- Subjective evidence such as hearsay or opinion is not included
- Generalisations and assumptions have not been made

Effective appraisals are the product of evidence gathered at one-to-ones throughout the year. A solid body of evidence should exist prior to the performance discussion. Furthermore, the jobholder should know about that evidence and should have a good idea of how he/she is performing before the end of the appraisal cycle.

## 9. Disability

- 9.1** In most cases a person's disability will have little or no effect on their ability to meet the objectives and competencies required to perform in the role.

It is essential that managers do not make assumptions about the capability or the potential of staff with disabilities. In particular managers should be wary of assuming that a person with a disability cannot make as effective a contribution as someone without a disability. Disability covers a wide variety of impairments, the effects of which are particular to each individual disabled person.

- 9.2** Managers should take into account the effects of a person's disability when agreeing objectives and should discuss with the jobholder whether reasonable adjustments should be made as part of the appraisal process. In many cases reasonable adjustments need not be complicated or costly, for example allowing someone slightly longer to complete a task might be considered a reasonable adjustment.
- 9.3** In some cases the effect of a person's disability is not uniform over time and managers should consider this when deciding how often to review objectives with the jobholder. In the case of long term absence due to a disability the manager should always consider whether targets will need to be adjusted to allow the jobholder to readjust to the working environment.
- 9.4** When conducting an appraisal of performance line managers should take into account any factors beyond the jobholder's control which may have impacted on their ability to deliver the objective. This could include the effect of a disability.
- 9.5** We treat people as individuals and regard diversity as a strength. We also recognise the school's responsibilities under legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and expect all managers and staff to demonstrate this through the fair application of the Appraisal Process.

## 10. Long term absence and maternity leave

- 10.1** Employees who have been absent on a long-term basis from their normal role (including sickness or maternity leave) should be assessed for the period they have been at work.
- 10.2** Managers should be mindful of the effect that any sickness may have had on the level of performance before or following the period of absence. The jobholder should not be unreasonably penalised if a drop in performance may have been caused by sickness or maternity-related factors.
- 10.3** If a jobholder is absent for the whole of the review period, an appraisal need not be completed. However a record should be made highlighting the reasons for non-submission of the appraisal so that a note can be kept on the jobholder's file.
- 10.4** Paragraph 14.1 sets out the eligibility criteria for incremental salary progression. Where a member of staff is absent due to maternity or long-term sickness the manager must decide whether they would otherwise have met the criteria to be eligible for incremental

progression (basing the performance rating on the time actually spent in work during the appraisal year and/or previous performance information/ratings etc.). Where a decision is made that the criteria would have been met, this should be approved by the headteacher and moderation panel in the usual way (see also paragraph 14.2)

## **11. New starters / transfers / promotions / secondments / change of manager during the review period**

### **11.1 New starters**

If a new employee joins during the review period, he/she should initially be managed under the probation procedure. On successful completion of probation, objectives should be set under the appraisal process and an appraisal written for the period after probation until the end of the appraisal cycle.

Where probation is completed with less than two months of the appraisal cycle remaining, an appraisal need not be completed. However a record should be made highlighting the reasons for non-submission of the appraisal and kept on the jobholder's file.

### **11.2 Transfers, promotions and in-house secondments**

If a jobholder transfers or is promoted to a new position during the review period, then their current objectives need to be closed. A one-to-one meeting should be arranged to review performance to date and an interim appraisal should be completed by the (old) manager. This appraisal should be kept locally on the individual's personal file.

The new manager will agree new objectives for the rest of the year, complete the appraisal process and complete documents in the normal way at the end of the performance year.

Where an in-house secondment takes place part way through the review year the process should generally reflect that as mentioned above. Depending on the timing and duration of the secondment the responsibilities for carrying out appraisals should be agreed between the old and new managers at the start of the secondment process.

A transfer, promotion or in-house secondment is viewed as a new post. Jobholders need to be in post for a full performance year (March – April) to be eligible for incremental salary progression and so a jobholder who transfers is promoted or undertakes an in-house secondment during a performance year will not be eligible for incremental progression.

Where a jobholder in restructure is assimilated to a post in the new structure which is an 80% or more match, this is considered to be a continuation within the same post.

For more information on incremental salary progression see section 14.

### 11.3 Change of manager

If the manager moves position or leaves during the appraisal cycle, a one-to-one meeting should be arranged to review the jobholder's performance to date and an interim appraisal should be completed by the manager.

This is an integral part of the manager's responsibilities and should be considered an essential duty during the handover/notice period.

Appraisal documentation should then be given to the employee's new manager who should include this information as part of the end-of-year appraisal.

## 12. Assessment and rating

**12.1** In most cases, where the evidence is solid and discussions throughout the year have been regular, open and fair, the formal assessment should flow very easily.

Assessing individual performance is about answering the question "how well is the jobholder meeting overall requirements and expectations, taking into account the achievement of targets and objectives,"

Whenever possible the manager should seek to arrive at a rating category that the jobholder agrees with and accepts. Where there are differences of view the manager should do everything possible to clarify and resolve these. However it is the manager's responsibility to ensure an appropriate rating is given at the end of the cycle.

To achieve equity and fairness the manager should take account of the following:

- The rating must be based on objective evidence of the jobholder's overall performance, during the entire year
- Work performance should be regularly discussed and documented throughout the year through face to face discussions
- There should be no surprises at the end of year's performance review

### 12.2 Rating objectives

- An assessment should be made against each objective using a four point scale. Schools using competencies should assess them in a similar way. An overall assessment of performance should then be made against the four point scale.:
- **Excellent:** Is able to demonstrate through evidence that measurements exceed those agreed in the objective
- **Good:** Is able to demonstrate through evidence that measurements meet those agreed in the objective
- **Fair:** Is able to demonstrate through evidence that measurements partially meet those agreed in the objective
- **Unsatisfactory:** Is unable to demonstrate through evidence achievement of the measurements agreed in the objective

**12.3** Then assess the achievement of objectives as a whole using the four point scale

- **Excellent:** A contribution that consistently exceeds the agreed objectives, demonstrating outstanding performance far beyond the normal requirements of the role
- **Good:** A contribution that consistently achieves the agreed objectives, fully meeting the normal requirements of the role
- **Fair:** A contribution that is stronger in some aspects of the role than others, where some, but not all agreed objectives are met
- **Unsatisfactory:** A contribution that is below requirements, where few, if any of the agreed objectives are met

**12.4** When deciding overall rating to give for objectives managers should consider the following:

- Were objectives reviewed appropriately? In other words, have circumstances changed since they were agreed?
- The relative weighting/ importance of each of the objectives
- Whether, on balance, the ratings applied are a realistic reflection of the jobholder's performance
- Whether there is a theme in the ratings of individual objectives, i.e. whether one rating appears frequently
- Whether there is sufficient evidence to justify the ratings applied

## **13. Link with the capability procedure**

**13.1** Underperformance can occur at any point during the appraisal cycle and should be dealt with as soon as it occurs. Initial concern about performance should be addressed as soon as possible as part of this process, with appropriate support being provided and reasonable timescales given for improvement. Informal management intervention, in the form of additional guidance, support or training, can be enough to return performance to the required standard. However, where these avenues have been exhausted it may be necessary to take a more formal approach through the capability procedure.

**13.2** If performance does not improve to a satisfactory level, the annual performance assessment due under the appraisal process will be brought forward and completed by the jobholder's manager. The jobholder's performance will be rated against each objective and competency. Evidence of not meeting performance targets will need to be provided and the measures taken to support the employee in improving their performance will need to be demonstrated. The capability procedure should be invoked where the employee's overall rating is "unsatisfactory".

**13.3** Where the capability procedure is invoked, the normal performance cycle under the appraisal process will be suspended for the duration of the formal capability action.

**13.4** Being subject to formal action under the capability procedure during part of the appraisal year does not mean that the overall rating given at the end of the appraisal year will be 'unsatisfactory' in all cases. Managers should consider performance across the whole year taking into account the length of time spent being managed under the capability

procedure, and whether there has been a satisfactory period of sustained performance since capability procedures ended.

## 14. Link with incremental progression

**14.1** Employees appointed on grades with more than one spinal point are eligible for incremental progression if they:

- Have been in post for a full performance year (*before the start of the appraisal process*)
- Have headroom to progress in their grade
- Receive an overall rating of 'excellent' in their appraisal for the previous performance year, which is subsequently confirmed by the moderation panel

**14.2** An overall rating of 'excellent' for the performance year is considered as provisional until it has been confirmed by the moderation panel.

All completed appraisal forms will be submitted to the headteacher by 31 December each year by the relevant reviewing manager. The headteacher will add his/her comments where an overall rating of 'excellent' has been awarded.

The moderation panel will meet in June each year. Where an overall rating of 'excellent' has been provisionally awarded the headteacher will be asked to attend in order to support the case for the award of this rating. Based on the available evidence the panel will then decide whether to confirm the rating or to amend it.

Where the award of an increment is approved it will be backdated to April of the performance year in which it was approved.

The decision of the moderating panel is final and there is no right or avenue of appeal against a decision made by the panel.

## 15. Appeals

**15.1** If a jobholder disagrees with the overall rating given he/she should try to resolve this with his/her line manager. The line manager should review the evidence of performance with the employee and a further discussion should take place aimed at reaching agreement.

If this course of action does not provide a solution to the issue the employee may make an appeal by writing to the reviewing manager setting out the reasons for the appeal and the preferred outcome. The reviewing manager will hold discussions with the manager and jobholder and also conduct a further review of the evidence.

The reviewing manager will inform the employee in writing of the outcome of this process, i.e. the original rating being confirmed or amended.

Exceptions to this approach include:

- Where an overall rating of 'unsatisfactory' is given. In this case the appeals procedure under the capability procedure will apply

- Decisions about ratings made by the moderation panel. These decisions are final and there is no right or avenue for appeal

**15.2** The grievance procedure cannot be used in relation to performance ratings within appraisal.

## **16. Further advice**

Managers seeking further advice on the application of the appraisal process should

- a) Speak to their own line manager
- b) Contact their HR service provider