



South East Cornwall Multi Academy
Regional Trust

SMART Expected Standards for use in Appraisal and Development for all SMART staff 2026-2027.

Including:

- Teacher Standards [\(see UK standards\)](#)
- Teaching Assistant Standards [\(see UK standards\)](#)
- Support Staff Standards (Generic)
- Support Staff Standards (Blank to write your own)
- National Head Teacher Standards [\(see UK standards\)](#)
- Leadership Standards – The Leadership Ladders
- Standards for professional meetings

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Expecting Continuous Lifelong Learning



“All people who work in schools must have a clear and lifelong belief in the power and joy of learning. They must, themselves be curious lifelong learners.”

Our commitment as a Trust is to ensure that all staff and students are empowered to make progress in their learning every year.

For ECT staff we use the national system of mentor support and for all other staff, we use our appraisal system as the main vehicle for coaching and support. These ensure all staff who have more than a 0.25FTE contract are given regular help to achieve improvement.

Our appraiser team is trained to provide the right balance of challenge and support but it is the member of staff themselves who are encouraged to take the lead and our main expectation is that each member of staff will embrace learning and be openly curious and keen to set their own annual personal goals that make the full use of the support provided by their appraiser.

This document sets out as clearly as possible, the standards of excellence that all staff can aspire to. Please use it to help you select which steps are next for you.

Common Expectations of all Staff Working in SMART

We EQUIP all **learners** in SMART be they staff or students, with educational opportunities that broaden their perspective and enhance their life chances and future career. We aim to increase the capacity for outstanding **leadership** across all our **communities** utilising **collaborative**, **equitable** and **compassionate** practices with professional **integrity**. In all our work together we:

Expect the best,
Question deeply,
Understand our goals,
Inspire a love of learning and
Praise achievement.

All the guides in this document are categorised under these EQUIP headings.

Common expectations for all those who work in public service

All those who work and volunteer in all public services such as schools are required to uphold the **Seven Principles of Public Life** known as the **Nolan Principles**, these form the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office holders: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. [Click here for further information from the gov.uk website.](#)

Our appraisal categories

Through research informed consultation with support staff, teachers and leaders we have decided to focus our annual goals into three broad categories.

Objective 1 – Improvements to your main role.

Objective 2 – A STAR project – Researching a new idea, trying it and evaluating it.

Objective 3 – Improving or using your skills of leadership to benefit others.

This document is organised under these headings so that staff can use it as a reference guide for ideas when they are setting goals each year. It is not expected that all staff will be excellent at all areas, the beauty and power of collaboration is recognising we all have different strengths. It is understood however that a greater sense of achievement is gained through challenge and hence excellence is described in each area to help all staff aspire to excellence and set goals that represent a personal challenge.

Appraisal Objective 1:

Helping you to bring about an improvement in your main role.



Choose something that you believe will lead to improvements in the way you work or improve your department or your school. Choose something you would like to get regular feedback about from your appraiser.

Examples of main roles

- Laboratory technician
- Receptionist
- Classroom Teacher
- Teaching assistant
- Grounds staff
- ICT technician
- Financial management
- Secretarial support
- Business administration
- General support staff roles
- Headteacher

Guidance we have so far developed

EQUIP standards, single skill ladders
EQUIP standards

EQUIP standards based on civil service
National Headteacher standards 2020

Teacher Classroom Standards: SMART Standards (see UK standards)

EQUIP	Shorthand	Outstanding		Below minimum standards
E xpect the best	ES1 - Consistent approach	Establishing very clear working boundaries so new ideas are easier to try. People feel safe to experiment		Inconsistency in books and expressed by pupils. Lack of clarity over the rules. (MR)
	ES2 - Helps pupils self-direct	Structured habit forming and methods that allow self-organisation by children and TAs (BO)		High teacher dependency. Uncertainty as to next task when teacher not there
	ES3 - Resilient belief in all children	Evidence of sticking with goals set for children when others may have given up – literacy etc. Never giving up on a child determination. Systematic tracking (R)		Same mistakes in books not corrected or followed up. Tolerance of pupil disruption, low expectations for some or view that nothing can be done
	ES4 - Supports well-being	Structured choices so children feel empowered. Tough love, empathy, care, consideration. Patience (no favouritism or over reaction), mutual respect		Limited ability to differentiate serious concerns of young people from those aimed at attention seeking. Some children feel disempowered or frustrated (ME)
Q uestion deeply	QE1 - Opening mind	Works from the starting point of the child – listens to understand then puts alternate arguments (PO)		Accepts or promotes prejudice without questioning. Narrows arguments. Uses gender or other stereotypes
	QE2 - Explaining clearly	Good explaining: Children ask questions because they know the answers will help them understand (FS)		Pupils do not tend to ask for explanations from the teacher. Explanations re-iterate rather than reframe
	QE3 - Having pace and purpose	Clear passion and purpose for the subject and the success of children. No activity is filling in		Some appear to be ‘holding’ activities. Teacher may be negative about their subject or excusing work
	QE4 - Use of intervention	Effectively directs intervention to ensure all engaged Disadvantage is known and positively challenged		Lack of knowledge of pupils at an individual level. May miss opportunities, relying on labels or assumptions
	QC1 - Use of Learning hooks	Resources and approach captures the imagination of learners and naturally lead to ideas and questions (I)		Process is pedestrian or does not lead to any deeper questions from pupils or discussion on task
	QC2 - Making Connections	Uses links where they are helpful to give children context around their learning (ML)		Pupils would be unable to know why the work is needed or how it fits with the course or their life
	QC3 - Developing higher order thinking	Open ended conceptual questioning used to diagnose misconceptions. Teacher always aware of concepts they are working towards and how to check depth		Closed questioning. Use of VAK to limit or label. Rules rather than concepts. No experimentation (TCR). May over scaffold learning to remove higher thinking
	QC4 - Being adaptable and flexible	Growth mindset: Everything possible, questions assumptions, adapts approach and is flexible. Focussed on what could unlock learners’ abilities (QA)		Teacher continues with ineffective strategies or fails to capitalise on unplanned opportunities for learning. Those with SEND may not be accommodated
U nderstand goals	UR1 - Next steps progress	Clearly defined ‘ladders’ of progress so learners set themselves next steps challenges instinctively		Pupils who need next steps are given repetition or task in an unrelated concept (SYC)
	UR2 – Links all work to the objectives	There are clear differentiated objectives. Planning ensures all tasks focus on building these strategically and these in turn build into a coherent sequenced set		Unclear what the central objective is or how it helps to build understanding of a concept or how it practices an essential skill. Learning is disjointed (PDR)
	UR3 - Response to feedback	Assessment is clear enough and regular enough for peers and learners to make effective informed responses to feedback and self- assessment (IF)		There is limited response to feedback from pupils and this is rarely in relation to a next steps goal. Episodes of more than six hours of learning without feedback
	UR4 - Uses exemplification	Exemplars and displays allow pupils to compare their work to others constructively and refer to examples		Unclear to pupils what success looks like or which pieces of their work are most excellent and why (SL)
I nspire learning	IE1 - Role model learning	Professional curiosity to apply research and new ideas, sharing excitement of this with children (EAQ)		Teacher seems afraid to admit mistakes or learn from children. Rarely tries new approaches
	IE2 - Evaluative	Ability to develop useful measures to evaluate what is working and involve children’s views in this (EE)		Teacher may just use methods with bias, assumption or no research. May be reticent to ask pupil opinions
	IE3 - Open to new ideas	Magpie! Draws on a wide range of methods and ideas. Encourages children to use multiple sources too (SO)		Over dependency on a single scheme. Pupils may be used to using the first web search or taught to a test
	IE4 - Uses Metacognition	Metacognition: Pupils and teacher can use reasoning to explain how and why learning was improved (RC)		Pupils are rarely asked to reflect on how they learn well so find it hard to show you examples
P raise positive	PT1 - Establishes clear team roles	Maintains a positive pace (with a smile!) – reduces stress whilst maintaining the challenge and pace (TR)		Finds blame or doesn’t take responsibility. E.g. may sit a child with poor teamwork skills on their own
	PT2 - Manages time and resources well	Orchestrate the running of the lesson by directing students and staff to maximise learning time. TA time effectively used and peer learning is a feature (MTT)		TAs or pupils who have finished tasks may ‘float’ or lack direction. Lesson management may seem weak. The culture may allow peers to distract from learning
	PT3 - Coaching to praise strength	Children aspire to improve and take enjoyment in seeing achievements of peers. They know strengths of others as well as their own strengths (BTS)		Aspects of the classroom culture may be toxic such that learners feel reticent to be praised, share ideas or ask for help. Labels/stereotypes may create barriers
	PT4 - Evaluation class ethos	Systematically determine what is working and not to build relationships that make up a classroom dynamic that feels mutually supportive and productive (ETT)		The teacher may have poor awareness of their classroom ethos or how to improve it. They may be unaware that pupils are seeking to rule the room

Teaching Assistants (TA) Classroom Practice: SMART (see UK standards)

EQUIP	Shorthand	Outstanding		Below minimum standards
E xpect the best	ES1 - Consistent approach	STL19/37 - Applies the same approach as the teacher. Consistently and positively applies the teacher rules		Does not follow the same rules. May talk disruptively during class exposition. May lack consistency
	ES2 - Helps pupils self-direct	STL18 – Focuses on making the classroom routines used by the teacher into habits everyone uses		Regularly not present for the start or end of the lesson. Does work 'FOR' the child rather than enabling 'BY'
	ES3 - Resilient belief in all children	STL45 - Affirms and values children. Relentlessly builds self-esteem and challenges any 'I can't' ideas adding a 'yet'. Is a model of positive learning and positivity		May put down pupil or own achievement or limit unintentionally through humour. They may describe learning as a chore. They may apply labels to others
	ES4 - Supports well-being	STL46 - Finds opportunities to empower pupils, utilise their ideas and provide meaningful choices		May speak for the child or act as an unintentional barrier to peers or teacher interaction
Q uestion deeply	QE1 - Opening minds	STL47 - Is able to draw out children's views and help them keep ownership and express these views		May be unaware of their own fixed views such as gender expectations
	QE2 - Explaining clearly	STL33 - Makes notes regarding the way teachers explain key concepts so they can refer back to them		Just tell children answers without explanation. May see the answer as more important than the thinking
	QE3 - Having pace and purpose	STL48 - Where possible maintains pace and purpose across whole class on behalf of the teacher		May add to distraction by starting or joining in with off-topic discussions
	QE4 - Use of intervention	STL23 - Is clear which pupils' intervention is focussed on at any time. Assists in supporting and monitoring these		When asked, may not know which children intervention is currently focussed on
	QC1 - Use of learning hooks	STL24 - Models the use of imagination, awe and fascination to find ways of engaging children's interest		Doesn't try to engage children's imagination, may appear bored or uninterested
	QC2 - Making connections	STL32 - Uses links where they are helpful to give children context around their learning (ML)		Boxes in learning – e.g. may be surprised to be asked to do 'maths' in geography or unable to make links
	QC3 - Developing higher order thinking	STL34 - Ensures they understand concepts being taught and can spot misconceptions. Can work with any group enabling teachers to focus on highest needs		Tends to ask only closed questions and may press for 'correct' answers. They may be unaware of their own misconceptions so may incorrectly advise
	QC4 - Being adaptable and flexible	STL12 - Uses own initiative so that if learning takes unexpected turns, they can make use of this. Understands how and why learning is adapted		Unable to venture 'off piste' successfully. Regularly misses opportunities to pick up on learning. May have a formulaic view of how to support SEND or adapt
U nderstand goals	UR1 - Next steps progress	STL6/9 - Uses guidance from the teacher to make sure all children who are unchallenged are given next steps		May be unaware that a child is doing work that contains no effective challenge for them
	UR2 - Links all work to the objectives	STL30 - Takes the learner back to 'what are you trying to achieve; and builds up so focus is understood. Sees any activity in the context of the concept or objective		May not understand how activities fit together or how they should link them with children. Learners may not be able to act independently as they can't see links
	UR3 - Response to feedback	STL25/26 - Literacy and numeracy radar constantly on! Regularly checks feedback has been acted on		May not understand the central role feedback plays in learning so may overlook helping children act on it
	UR4 - Uses exemplification	STL16 - Makes full use of any exemplar work provided on posters and by the teachers like model answers		Unclear what success looks like or which pieces of their work are most excellent and why (SL)
I nspire learning	IE1 - Role model learning	STL68 - Acts as a mentor and coach to learners they work with. Is inspired by their achievements		TA may not be proactive in seeking to improve their own learning. May not share surprise or curiosity
	IE2 - Being Evaluative	STL55 - Provides useful feedback for the teacher. Is able to identify what worked well		May not be able to give feedback to the teacher that is respectful, thoughtful and helpful so may stop trying
	IE3 - Open to new ideas	STL56 - Brings useful ideas from their work with other teachers to the attention of the teacher		May not help create new resources or actively maintain existing ones. May be negative about change
	IE4 - Uses metacognition	STL50 - Can offer insight into how children in their care tend to learn best or how they can be supported		May continue to use the conclusions of others even when their own experience of the child is different
P raise positive	PT1 - Establishes clear team roles	STL20 - Maintains the teacher's presence in the room by proactively supporting throughout the lesson		May not check regularly that the teacher is happy with how they have interpreted their role
	PT2 - Manages time and resources well	STL54/57 - Proactively fills gaps such as covering for absent staff and stepping in when the teacher is engaged. Is intuitive and rarely needs direction		May not respond rapidly to direction. May be unclear how to help at times resulting in 'floating'. May be wasteful of materials or time
	PT3 - Coaching to praise strength	STL29 - Most pupils in the class would be able to give examples of praise or encouragement from TA		Perhaps rarely or inconsistently uses praise. Praise given may lack specifics or enthusiasm
	PT4 - Maintains a class ethos	STL31 - Is attentive to detail regarding the learning environment and classroom ethos		May be unaware of bullying or low level disruption intended to undermine TA, teacher or peers

A general set of standards adapted from the civil service for Support Staff.

This set is for staff who don't yet have a specific set of their own that has been developed in SMART. This set has been adapted from the set of standards used by the national civil service for all posts up to executive officer because this set has been used successfully for many years across a large range of roles. Key: L&C = Leading and Communicating, C&P = Collaborating and Partnering and BC4A = Building Capacity for All.

		Shorthand	Outstanding	Below minimum standards
E Expect the best	S Self-management	ES1 - Consistent protocols / Manage risk by following protocols	BC4A - Find ways to learn and personally improve in the completion of day-to-day tasks	Maintain a rigid view of daily tasks, missing opportunities to learn or to improve.
		ES2 - Help others self-direct / Be organised yourself		
		ES3 - Resilient belief in others / Resilient yourself		
		ES4 - Support well-being / Manage emotions yourself	C&P - Try to see issues from others' perspectives and check understanding	Look at issues from own viewpoint only
Q Question deeply	E Effective participation	QE1 - Open minds of others / See both sides yourself / Persuade	C&P - Listen to the views of others and show sensitivity towards others	Not treat all colleagues fairly, equitably or with respect
		QE2 - Explain things clearly / Find solutions and explanations	L&C - Write clearly in plain simple language and check work for spelling and grammar, learning from previous inaccuracies	Make little effort to ensure they express themselves in an effective manner that others can easily understand
		QE3 - Have pace and purpose / Get involved yourself		
		QE4 - Use of intervention / Identify issues that need intervention		
	C Creative Thinker	QC1 - Sparking ideas in others / Using your Imagination	L&C - Put forward their own views in a clear and constructive manner, choosing an appropriate communication method, e.g. email/ telephone/ face to face	Miss opportunities to contribute positively to discussions about the organisation or team
		QC2 - Making Connections for others / Making links yourself		
		QC3 - Engaging others in higher order thinking / Questioning your own assumptions	L&C - Ask open questions to appreciate others' point of view	Withhold work information or refuse to share knowledge that would help others do better
		QC4 - Being adaptable and flexible / Bold to take creative risks	C&P - open to taking on different roles	Assume specific, unvarying role responsibilities
U Understand	R Reflective	UR1 - Setting others next steps/ Setting yourself challenges	BC4A - Identify own skills, knowledge and behaviour gaps to inform own development plan and discuss these with the line manager	Take a passive approach to personal development, mostly relying on others to identify learning points or dismissing constructive feedback

		Shorthand	Outstanding	Below minimum standards
Inspire learning		UR2 - Make objectives clear / Plan-do- and review to objectives	BC4A - Recognise and take time to achieve own learning and development objectives	Lack interest in personal development, decline all opportunities to learn e.g. through attending programmes or engaging in work-place learning
		UR3 - Provide feedback that needs a response / invite feedback	BC4A - React constructively to developmental feedback that result in changes	Do little to follow through on constructive developmental feedback, ignore or dismiss its value
		UR4 - Metacognition, using examples to show how people learned/ Share your own learning	BC4A - Share learning with team and colleagues; contribute to the team's shared learning and understanding	Keep knowledge and expertise to themselves rather than share for the benefit of the whole team
	Enquiry	IE1 - Role model learning / ask and explore questions	BC4A - Improve own performance by taking on board feedback from colleagues from different backgrounds	Ignore or undervalue the contributions and views of others from different backgrounds
		IE2 - Provide multiple sources / Evaluate sources of evidence	C&P - Seek help when needed in order to complete own work effectively	Miss opportunities to generate better outcomes for children and staff through collaboration with others
		IE3 - Present different viewpoints / Stay objective, show balance	L&C - Act in a fair and respectful way in dealing with others	Show bias or a lack of respect and treat some groups more favourably than others
		IE4 - Requiring concise summaries / Synthesise conclusions		
Praise positive	Team Worker	PT1 - Require clear team roles / Take responsibility	C&P - Proactively contribute to the work of the whole team	Focus on own objectives at the expense of supporting colleagues
		PT2 - Provide appropriate time and resources / Manage time and resources well in the team		
		PT3 - Role model coaching the team / Build team strength, ethos	C&P - Get to know fellow team members/colleagues and understand their viewpoints and preferences	Is overly critical and blaming of people who have different working styles or development needs
		PT4 - Role model use of evidence based praise and feedback / Evaluate your team ethos	L&C - Focus on actions of those that are making a positive contribution and collaborates to find collective solutions to any raised concern	Focuses on the failings of others or problems for which they themselves cannot offer a useful solution

National Headteacher Standards

The following text has been taken from the National [Headteacher standards 2020](#).

Headteachers occupy an influential position in society and shape the teaching profession.

They are lead professionals and significant role models within the communities they serve. The values and ambitions of headteachers determine the achievements of schools. They are accountable for the education of current and future generations of children. Their leadership has a decisive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in the nation's classrooms. Headteachers lead by example the professional conduct and practice of teachers in a way that minimises unnecessary teacher workload and leaves room for high quality continuous professional development for staff. They secure a climate for the exemplary behaviour of pupils.

They set standards and expectations for high academic standards within and beyond their own schools, recognising differences and respecting cultural diversity within contemporary Britain. Headteachers, together with those responsible for governance, are guardians of the nation's schools.

Section 1: Ethics and Professional Conduct

Headteachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct. They are expected to meet the teachers' standards and be responsible for providing the conditions in which teachers can fulfil them as well as upholding and demonstrating the Seven Principles of Public Life at all times. Specifically:

1. build relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position
2. show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others, recognising differences and respecting cultural diversity within contemporary Britain
3. uphold fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
4. ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit their position, pupils' vulnerability or might lead pupils to break the law

As leaders of their school community and profession, headteachers:

5. serve in the best interests of the school's pupils
6. conduct themselves in a manner compatible with their influential position in society by behaving ethically, fulfilling their professional responsibilities and modelling the behaviour of a good citizen
7. uphold their obligation to give account and accept responsibility
8. know, understand, and act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities
9. take responsibility for their own continued professional development, engaging critically with educational research
10. make a positive contribution to the wider education system

Domain One: School Culture - Headteachers:

11. establish and sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction in partnership with those responsible for governance and through consultation with the school community
12. create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life
13. uphold ambitious educational standards which prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life
14. promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community and a safe, orderly and inclusive environment
15. ensure a culture of high staff professionalism

Domain Two: Teaching - Headteachers:

16. establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn
17. ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains
18. ensure effective use is made of formative assessment

Domain Three: Curriculum and assessment - Headteachers:

19. ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught
20. establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional networks and communities
21. ensure that all pupils are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly the use of systematic synthetic phonics in schools that teach early reading
22. ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum

Domain Four: Behaviour - Headteachers:

23. establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff and pupils
24. ensure high standards of pupil behaviour and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
25. implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviour

26. ensure that adults within the school model and teach the behaviour of a good citizen

Domain Five: Additional and Special Educational needs and disabilities - Headteachers:

27. ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities
28. establish and sustain culture and practices that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively
29. ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers and professionals, to identify the additional needs and special educational needs and disabilities of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate
30. ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties regarding the SEND code of practice

Domain Six: Professional Development - Headteachers:

31. ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs
32. prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development
33. ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from beyond the school, as well as within it, including nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning

Domain Seven: Organisational Management - Headteachers:

34. ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care
35. prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds
36. ensure staff are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload
37. establish and oversee systems, processes and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently
38. ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk

Domain Eight: Continuous School Improvement - Headteachers:

39. make use of effective and proportional processes of evaluation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers which limit school effectiveness, and identify priority areas for improvement

40. develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's context
41. ensure careful and effective implementation of improvement strategies, which lead to sustained school improvement over time

Domain Nine: Working in Partnership - Headteachers:

42. forge constructive relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community
43. commit their school to work successfully with other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge and support
44. establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all pupils

Domain Ten: Governance and Accountability - Headteachers:

45. understand and welcome the role of effective governance, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility
46. establish and sustain professional working relationship with those responsible for governance
47. ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account
48. ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties

Links to other National standards that you can use

National Standards for Teachers

The new national 'golden thread' defines teaching standards throughout your career.

- For classroom teachers here is the link. [National Teacher Standards](#)
- For those who are leading teacher development: [National NPQLTD Framework](#)
- For pastoral leaders/leading behaviour and culture - [National NPQLBC Framework](#)
- For leaders of curriculum / leading teaching – [National NPQLT Framework](#)
- For those aspiring to senior leadership – [National NPQSL Framework](#)
- National standards for Headteachers – [Standards](#) and [NPQH framework](#)
- For CEOs and Executive Leaders – [National NPQEL Framework](#)
- For leaders of literacy – [National NPQLL Framework](#)
- For leaders of Early Years – [National NPQEY Framework](#)
- For those leading Special Educational Needs – [Transition to NPQ for SENCOs](#)

National Standards for Teaching Assistants

These standards are due to be newly aligned to the 'golden thread' but this current version is still accessible until the new standards are published. [National standards for TAs](#)

National Standards for all roles via the national standards database

National standards are developed for all roles in the UK and are stored in a national database. This is difficult to navigate because of the enormous variety of jobs. The following link will take you to the search page you can use to look for relevant standards. [NOS Search](#)

Appraisal Objective 2:

Your STAR project – Smart Tested Action Research.



Choose something you are curious about. A question or idea you would like to try out this year to see if you can make it work or not. You may take an idea from SMART day or use any idea you read about or heard about that interested you. It doesn't matter if your project doesn't work, trial and error is a powerful way of learning. You will have met your appraisal objectives if you...

1. Choose an idea that is new to you and will benefit others in some way
2. Do some research such as reading about it or discussing it with colleagues
3. Plan how you are going to try it out and get support from your appraiser
4. Try it out - this could be five weeks of preparation for a new event or six weeks of trying a new habit or a whole year of doing something differently
5. Evaluate if it worked or not with your appraiser. You could ask people who benefitted from your project what they thought of it for example
6. If it worked, why not share it at the next SMART day to inspire other people. You can limit your audience to 3 people if you are nervous about sharing.

KPIs – Key Performance Indicators

These were introduced to STAR projects in 2025 to ensure the projects could be more easily evaluated for impact which would help the sharing of good ideas. If the KPI gets worse after the project then as long as it is evaluated this does not prevent the STAR project from being a 'pass'.

Decide on what will be your KPI and then take a measurement of it before you start the project.

Take exactly the same measurement at the end of your STAR project to see how it has impacted.

Some examples of STAR projects that staff have done in the past

There are no limits to the creativity of staff and so the range of successful STAR projects people have done over the past five years is truly enormous. You can literally do anything that will benefit others. Most examples that we hear about are taken from those that staff presented at SMART day.

SMART day happens in February and all staff are invited. Lots of staff offer to share ideas and then staff choose the ones they want to hear more about.

Approximately one third of all support staff, one third of all teachers and most leadership post holders present ideas each SMART day.

When you share an idea on SMART day, you are given the email addresses of your audience and they are encouraged to let you know how they have used your idea. Lots of presenters find this the most inspiring part of STAR projects because they can see how an idea that they started has gone on to lead to new ideas in other settings.

Clearly two thirds of all STAR projects are never presented on SMART day and there are some really interesting ideas in this group. Some of them are not presented because we have not yet encouraged all staff to have the confidence to share them and some are not presented because the member of staff wants to do more work on them or were not happy how they turned out.

Here are a few examples but please don't let these limit your imagination as to what you would want to try.

- A TA wanted to set up a Lego club run by children. This was so successful that they had to have a waiting list. Covid prevented the idea from being shared more widely.
- A member of the admin team was frustrated that a room in their school was being used to just store equipment when it could be used by children. They pulled together a group of children who decided on a design for the walls and how they wanted to use it. They managed a budget from the headteacher and the room has been used ever since.

- A secretary was frustrated by the number of emails that they were being CC'd into and discovered this was a concern for a lot of their colleagues. They wrote some guidance for when CC should and should not be used. This was debated and agreed resulting in a decrease of emails for everyone on their team.
- A teacher wanted to try replacing homework marking with live marking in lessons. They did some professional reading about the theory of assessment, gained agreement from the Head through their appraiser and tried out the idea with their classes. The project went on to be used by the school to change their assessment policy.

Appraisal Objective 3:

Leadership at every level – Using your leadership skills to benefit others.



We all work in teams. Choose something that will help to make the teams you work in better. Look at our SMART Leadership Ladders in this guide for ideas. Level 1 suggest ways to help your team work better and the higher levels suggest how you can coach others in leadership.

Summary of the Leadership Ladder for all staff in SMART

Outstanding leadership is critical to schools, businesses, communities and governments. This is why the development of leadership is one of the three pillars upon which SMART is built.

All staff in SMART identify the leadership level they are currently working at and, during their appraisal, which level they would like to be at by the end of the year. Often these levels can be the same if a member of staff is already at a level of leadership which is on or above the level expected for their role and does not wish to develop this area. The chart below shows rough bands for level of expected leadership based broadly on grades and level of experience.

The ladder runs from level 1 to 10 and the expected minimum standards vary depending on the role. Further explanations of what each level means are included in ladders in the next section.

Level	Teaching →	UNQ 1	UNQ 2+ M1-6	UPS1 TLR3	UPS2-3 TLR2	TLR1	AH	DH Head
	Non-Teaching →	A-E	F	G	H-I	J-K	L-M	N+
	Governance →	LGC	+Link	VC /TB	Chair	VC TB	TB Chair	NLG
1. Self-led reliability								
2. Reliable team role								
3. Develops ideas								
4. Develops others								
5. Responsibility for a team								
6. Multiple team building								
7. Whole school change								
8. MAT wide change								
9. Build strategic capacity								
10. System leadership								

Key: When you first enter a new role, you may be operating in the light brown region and should set appraisal objectives to improve your leadership level. As you gain more experience in that grade you should progress to the **Gold expected standard**. The Trust is committed to providing you with opportunities so you can progress to the green areas beyond the expected where you wish to. Those operating in the red area will be given support to rapidly improve.

Leadership training

Funding for training opportunities in leadership can be requested during appraisal meetings or by bidding for opportunities that are advertised. After such training, the member of staff will write up what they have learned and circulate to those involved as well as attaching a copy to their 'Staff Appraisal Report'

Governor Leadership Training

This mainly takes place through link meetings. A Trustee in charge of an area of responsibility is equivalent to a Chair of an LGC. VC = Vice Chair of LGC, VTb = Vice Chair of the Trust Board.

Summary of levels in the SMART Leadership Ladder

Minimum criteria	Examples
Leadership level 1. Supporting the Team by Being Reliable and Keeping to Deadlines	
Complete tasks reliably to a deadline and prior agreed standard. Actions always in line with the Code of Conduct • Separate personal from professional • At or above min. expectations in all areas of policy (see explanation below) • Actively promotes Ethos	All staff - Colleagues can rely on you to prioritise and manage your own workload so others are not having to chase and prompt. You take responsibility for your role and can separate personal from professional conduct. You know the Ethos of the school and actively protect and support it. As a member of the Trust you are committed to keeping children safe and our shared EQUIP principles. Students – You can achieve this level through consistent reliability and understanding how to support the ethos. You may represent your school. Governors/Trustees – Regular attendance at meetings. Required preparation for meetings and responding in reasonable time to email requests. Sending in apologies without prompting. Confidentiality and ability to separate personal from professional especially around any possible conflict of interest. You actively promote the ethos of the school and of the Trust.

Code of Conduct - As level 1 is the start of the ladder, it also must include all the minimum standards that are expected of all staff in the Trust. Given that failure to achieve these standards falls below the minimum for employment, these standards have a different and more critical status than any other level and so have been agreed through extensive discussion with all the unions that represent staff as well as with our trustees and governors. These agreed policies appear on the website and represent our full code of conduct. A brief description of the main ones appear below.

Name of the Policy	Brief description
Staff Code of Conduct - link	Sets out as clearly as possible the expectations for conduct of all staff.
Whistleblowing Policy - link	How to report practice that is unethical or potentially harmful.
Disciplinary Policy - link	How every member of staff should expect to be treated if they make a potentially serious mistake or misjudgement.
Staff acceptable use policy - link	How we use ICT changes all the time and all staff need to manage their online presence in a way that is seen as acceptable in the community.
Appraisal Policy - link	Formal responsibilities of the appraiser, the appraisee and leaders.
Grievance Policy - link	How to let governors know if you believe you have not been treated well.

Separating personal from professional – The clearest way to separate you personally from the role you are employed to do is to realise that It should be impossible for any member of staff or student to know if you like them or dislike them as a person. When you are at work you are employed in your role and it is this role that is being represented at meetings, in staffrooms and at all times. Another way of considering it is by looking at the values of the Trust or your school. If you are employed by a Trust that describes staff as positive, then when in the role you must be positive.

Ethos – This is how it feels to be in the organisation. Each school in the Trust has the same EQUIP principles and in addition to this each school has a small number of values that they particularly feel are vital to run through everything they do. For the Trust the values are **collaborative**, **equitable** and **compassionate** practices with professional **integrity**. You would not walk past an occasion when an employee wasn't compassionate for example.

Minimum criteria	Examples
Leadership level 2. Being an Active Member of the Team	
• Work as a team including actively collaborating with others who may not be in your direct local team • Respects cabinet principle • Never walks past anything out of line with our expectations either challenging it or reporting it to line manager or anonymously online.	Staff – People rely on you for your positive professionalism including coaching others in the team to complete their own tasks on time so the whole team is successful and building trusted relationships with everyone you work with. You can be relied on to never walk past and always take action when you witness anything that falls outside of our shared ethos, principles and values including any policies not being followed or anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Ideally this will mean you, but failing this, to either raise it with your line manager or if you feel unable to then, to report anonymously. Cabinet principle – if you offer opinions in a meeting you will know that once the decision is made you all must follow it and actively support it. Students – Bring together a team of qualified level 1 students to achieve goals or be relied upon to step in to organise teams or run events. Personally to feel able to report anything that they don't believe fits with our ethos and encourage others to as well. Either to staff or anonymously online. Governors/Trustees – You work as a team with the other governors, sharing the work by doing school visits, link meetings and other duties when you are able to. You know that your key role is to ask questions that help you understand the current developments being taken by the school in their SDP and BDP more deeply and so you put into practice what you learn at link meetings and any training you do. If you had any concerns about the Trust you would use the cabinet principle and share these privately with the Clerk or your Chair. You would be happy to coach a new governor who has just joined your LGC. The principle of never walking past applies so that you will always follow up or report anonymously if you believe any actions are out of line with our culture.

Work as a team – The largest team you are in is the Trust, then probably the schools you work in, then the people who your line manager is also responsible for then the people you see most days. Most people have multiple teams. At level 2 there is the expectation that you have a professional responsibility to all of these and would never pitch one against the other.

Cabinet principle – The meeting takes decisions and once you have agreed then everyone owns that decision and supports it fully. You must be confident you can express opinions and have an excellent and open discussion during the meeting and then none of this will be shared outside because everyone present will support the decision. In the same way, if you have concerns about a decision or any issue you would only share this with the chair of the group or your line manager and not discuss your concerns with others.

Coaching – You clearly understand level 1 leadership so you would actively help any member of staff who did not yet understand so that they can also progress to level 2. A good coaching approach is to ask them questions to help them understand for example why the ethos is so important to protect.

Never walk past – If you ever did walk past or witness something that wasn't right because you did not have the confidence to challenge it then you would always report it to a leader.

Minimum criteria	Examples
Leadership level 3. Using Your Initiative to Develop good Solutions to Problems	
Own Ideas and initiative Explain ideas by relating to core values and vision. Empowers others by helping convert their concerns to actionable proposals. You value the SDP as the school's planned method for doing this. • Understands the power of a Vision • Understands how core values work • Correctly focusses any negativity into ideas for improvements • Proposes workable solutions to problems • Identifies priorities and minimises the time spent on what can't be changed	Staff – You close down negativity by focussing on what can be changed and coming up with solutions based on passion and vision. You are keen for your ideas to be used by others and keen to empower other staff to develop solutions of their own as well as seek out their ideas. Staff will tend to seek you out as a source of support or expertise. You are open minded and understand that decision making is a two stage process that begins with listening and informing yourself. You are aware your ideas may not work in every context and so you are keen to learn more about other people's perspectives and be honest about reflecting on your own. Hence you understand the value of collaboration. Typically, you would offer feedback to the School Development Plan discussions and look for opportunities to take part in shaping the school through this. Students – At this level, a student would have an idea for improvement that is likely to be adopted by the school. They will independently seek the views of others so that the proposal they present is workable. If the project is agreed they will already have formed a team of students who feel enough shared ownership of the ideas to keep involved. Governors/Trustees – You are someone who helps the governance team keep to its core roles and not get distracted into operational areas or items outside of governance. In most meetings and on most visits, you show enough initiative to be able to ask questions that generate discussion. You will have taken part in a panel in which your opinion and judgement was needed, or you may hold the vice chair position or chair a link meeting as a trustee. You could describe the vision of the school to others and would know the priorities in the current SDP (School Development Plan). You understand the SDP is vital to governance and you can form questions to check it is on track. As a governor or trustee of a collaborative Trust you are also keen to collaborate with governors in other schools in the Trust in order to learn from them and share what you know.

Close down negativity – people complaining about something over which they have no control, wastes valuable governance time so anyone who is able to spot this happening and work collectively to stop it is one of the most valuable assets in a team. This doesn't mean you remain blind to problems, quite the opposite. It means you direct any concerns confidentially to those who do have the power to change it and encourage others to (separately) do the same.

Own ideas and initiative – Ideas that help improve a priority area in need of change are fabulously useful. Level 3 leadership is about having enough awareness of the vision and the direction the school is going in to offer ideas and solutions that get people thinking about and debating the issues that need solving.

Minimum criteria	Examples
Leadership level 4. Taking a Leading Role and a Responsibility for Coaching Others	
Developing the skills of people around you and utilising your growing expertise in the service of others providing them with opportunities and coaching to develop their own leadership skills in the process. - Leads a PLC (Professional Learning Community) or working party of 3 or more (including them) - Collaborates in ways that build the capacity of all - Ability to research intent and justify in relation to vision & evidence - Plans for and achieves intended implementation goals - Ability to analyse information to show impact of their work	Staff – You have the leadership skills required to increase your own professional knowledge through asking questions, listening, reading and understanding what ‘evidence based’ means’ e.g. that data just provides lines of enquiry. You know enough about working with others to know we all think differently, assumptions can lead to problems and confident people are not always right. You understand how important it is to the whole Trust that you share and utilise your expertise such as through our annual SMART day for sharing ideas and through chairing or leading a group. These groups of 3 or more adults can be anyone including volunteers, staff in your school or staff outside your usual working team. You manage to lead this team through to completion of work or improvements that could not be possible without the active engagement of all of you. Through this process you take every opportunity to build up the leadership skills of everyone in the team, knowing where they are on the ladder and matching your support and challenge to what will help them. Students – If they are given the opportunity, a number of students could take on a role in school that has some responsibility and involves leading a team that they must coach. Student led conferences, student led events and sports leadership provide such opportunities. The same criteria as for adults above would apply. Governors/Trustees – As above, in the context of governance you have taken on a role or roles that place you in a leadership position such as the Vice Chair role of an LGC so your ‘team’ is the LGC or be a Trustee in which case your ‘team’ are the LGC governors reporting to you from each school. You will be actively coaching and encouraging the governors in your team to ensure that the whole team is growing in strength but the responsibility for this will rest with others (e.g. the Chair of Governors)

Opportunity creating as part of coaching – A level 4 leader of a team (we have agreed that the term ‘team’ in this case usually means 3 or more people) will be determined that everyone in their team will benefit professionally. This means taking pride in the success of other team members, letting others take the limelight and setting up opportunities that enable every person in the team to grow. Our current commitment is to **incremental coaching**. This model could be summarised as ‘little and often’. Appraisers should set up opportunities for themselves to see the appraisee in action regularly for short visits and to use this for praise and to agree incremental next steps each time. The GROW model is the coaching approach most used in the Trust although some use Shu, Ha, Re.

Evidence based professional knowledge – In medicine you can't prescribe a drug that research has just shown to have fatal side effects. In engineering you would be criticised for using a weaker and more expensive building material when research had found a better one. In all fields of work, professional knowledge increases over time and if you are coaching others you have to make sure your advice is up to date and shown to be effective. You may need to test any new idea out for yourself first, so you are better able to coach others.

Minimum criteria	Examples
Leadership level 5. Run a project through which you build the capacity of others	
Planning, leading and evaluating work, building capacity of staff and enhancing pupils' experiences. They are aware of all the teams they play a role in and seek to collaborate to improve the leadership skill of ALL team members they meet. • 'Engine room' for change in the teams they work in • Main role is the development of others (capacity) • Well researched and informed intent • Thinking deeply to use multiple models coherently • Efficient and effective team collaboration that engages others • Alignment with school /MAT values & vision • Implementation via agreed action plan • Active monitoring including holding to account • Balanced multi-source evaluation of impact • You listen more than you explain • You aim to promote all staff beyond instructional learning. <u>EEF Implementation framework</u> • You use the EEF guide to help you ensure all staff in your team are engaged in your vision • You use regular QA to ensure all your team unite around agreed processes • You reflect deeply and regularly as a leader and ensure the team does too	Staff – You make yourself the accountable lead in a project leading either a team permanently assigned to you or people who have come forward and committed their time to be part of just this one project, event or trip. <i>Intent:</i> You understand that your main role is building capacity and developing others. You actively support the vision and values of both the school and the wider Trust, and you ensure any work you plan aligns to these. You start your work by considering the purpose, 'starting with why' and having high yet achievable expectations for you and the staff you work with. You create the team culture for all opinions and ideas to be heard so the project is owned by the team. <i>Implementation:</i> By your own example of welcoming honest feedback and listening, you encourage transparency "it is OK to make mistakes but unacceptable not to reflect and learn from them". This no-blame honest approach helps professional trust and the capacity to tackle difficult problems and professional conflicts, removing these barriers to progress. You take responsibility for monitoring and quality assuring the work of your team and have them apply the same rules to you. You develop the skills of holding others to account so they are used to gaining positive praise from you as well as honest feedback, that they understand is given with their best interests at heart. All praise that is given is honest, specific and believable rather than just countering issues. You actively use the support of line managers through a "I'm thinking of approaching it this way because...., what do you think?" rather than a "what should I do" approach. You use a written action plan for your work together so that the whole team have a common jointly agreed description of what they are to do, why they are doing it and what success will look like. <i>Impact:</i> Through your work together, all members of the team will improve their skills and practice as well as sharing in the achievement of this. The experiences (successes and failures) should be shared to lead to wider impact. Your evaluation will be aware of confirmation bias and small sample sizes and the available research to give a measured and reliable account of the start and end position. Students – At time of print, no students had this level of accountability. Governors/Trustees – As above, in the context of governance this would be taking on the role of Chair of an LGC or working across the Trust on an initiative that will bring positive benefits to governance across the whole group. It may, in some cases involve taking on a significant piece of work that is of direct benefit to a school or the Trust, enabling the Trust board / CEO / Headteacher to see the impact and be supported directly by it. <i>Qualifications at the level of NPQLT, NPQLTD, NPQLBC can support this.</i>

Minimum criteria	Examples
Leadership level 6. Transformational Leadership across multiple teams	
Trusted professional knowledge based on balanced research • Main role is development of leadership for all • Powerhouse of the organisation and able to mobilise teams of level 5 leaders into common action • Committed to service of others over self interest • Collaborative and Empowering • Rationale always related back to vision • Trusted accurate use of praise • Ability to detect 'snake oil' and counter it • Well versed and knowledgeable in their area of expertise which may be pedagogy or business management • Able to recommend reading, courses and material in support of others	Staff – As with level 5 and above, your main goal is to provide a 'curriculum of opportunities' for staff that enables all staff to develop both their professional practice and utilise their leadership skills particularly those developing expertise at leadership level 5. This means examining each change or decision and looking for ways in which it can be used as a vehicle for capacity building. At level 6 you have reflected on these skills deeply enough to allow you to generalise them and hence apply them to new teams and new circumstances that you may not have encountered before or where you are working with teams that have greater domain specific expertise than you typically involving members in different schools across the Trust. You are skilled at scoping projects so that you maximise ownership of core decision making by initially using 'instructional methods' but then through excellent coaching and deeper questioning, move to transformational practice and rely less and less on instructional or operational direction and more and more on the active praise and recognition of the achievements of others. You inspire high levels of trust through honesty, integrity and professionalism such that specific praise from you is highly valued, mistakes can be shared with you, honest feedback is welcomed by you and even the most difficult issues are actively sought out by you, understanding that issues never decrease in size if they are avoided. You seek line management support in the most difficult of these. You are open minded and listen more than you explain. You value the contributions of all staff and students knowing that it isn't possible for anyone to see a problem from all perspectives and no discussion is entered into as one to 'win'. You are a role model for lifelong learning and having the humility to change approach in the light of debate. You are keener on the truth than being right. You conduct high quality reflective research and regularly turn this into high quality proposals and papers for discussion based on a five year vision recognising the addiction to high speed change and short termism can hamper genuine transformative change by distracting effort. You include acknowledgement of the differing strengths in your team when proposing next steps. Students - Greta Thunberg has more than demonstrated such powerhouse students exist but we don't yet have students who have mobilised others with such authority and mature balance. Governors/Trustees – As above, in the context of governance this would be a minimum requirement for the Vice Chair of the Trust Board as they are called to be informed across numerous aspects of governance to be able to provide effective and well placed challenge that supports the development of governance and the Trust as a whole. <i>Qualifications at the level of NPQSL can support this.</i> <i>For Governors - Regional support for Chairs of Governors.</i>

Minimum criteria	Examples
Leadership level 7. Full and delegated complex, multi-faceted responsibility	
Implement whole school change in practice based on sound research and impact • Good matching of leadership type to the problem/need • Accurate analysis of priorities for school/each team • Policy and practice entirely aligned, as shown by QA • Drives equity expecting the best for all staff and students • Reflective, ability to use criticism from all sources • Systematic leadership capacity building • Intent based on sound research and gov. policy • Systematic use of impact measures • Stakeholder views followed by action • Exploits chances of mutual support • Aligns budget to vision and aims	Staff - Able to utilise the skills of a wide range of people to consult effectively and implement ideas that challenge current practice for most staff. Ensuring credit is effectively shared and apportioned away from themselves to those they are developing. Equally ensuring blame is reduced through taking responsibility. If not yet a Headteacher you will have demonstrated the ability to deputise in all the leadership roles of the Headteacher with excellent communication via email and face to face to ensure a combined vision, direction and passion. Well-read and well-informed foundations allowing you to accurately conduct whole school peer reviews. Governors/Trustees – As above, in the context of governance this would be a minimum requirement for the Chair of the Trust Board. <i>Qualifications at the level of NPQH can support this for teacher leaders and qualifications such as the NLG (National Leader of Governance) for Governors and Trustees.</i>
Leadership level 8,9 and 10. Responsible action across numerous schools and teams	
Must involve members of staff leading change across a number of teams <i>Qualifications at the level of NPQEL can support this</i>	Bringing about measurable improvements across two or more organisations in a MAT or in a way which informs others in the MAT and empowers them to make similar improvements within their own context. Systematically building the leadership capacity of all those you work with. Engaging in five year strategic planning so that every change that is brought about contributes logically to a larger scale vision.
Must involve members of staff building strategic leadership capacity in others	- Providing decisive, honest and critically accurate feedback to leaders. - Strategically uses opportunities to bring on leaders at every level. - Role model for child centred ethos. - Management of multiple internal businesses within budget.
Must involve members of staff being credited with system change	- Opportunities to speak regionally and nationally or develop followings that bring about change based on sound research challenging bias or opinion. - Spreads Ethical leadership.

How do the Levels in the Leadership Ladder link to EQUIP?

The following descriptions are an attempt to provide broad differentiation and not as a literal guide.

EQUIP	Level 8 +	Level 6-7 Expectations	Level 3-5 Expectations	Level 1-2 Expectations
E xpect the best	You feel entirely safe the job is in safe hands. Whatever issues arise, they have the resilience, emotional strength, and determination to make it work.	Enough confidence to inspire trust, enough professionalism and resilience to be consistently reliable and enough humility to be fair.	They have high expectations of themselves but always get the balance right of avoided stress by being organised, reliable and managing any risks.	Completes tasks that have been set for them on time and to a good standard. No need for prompting. They often aim to go beyond.
Q uestion deeply	Moral courage to Identify the key issues of importance, develop strong persuasive arguments and take action to make a difference.	They are up to date on current issues and are able to give advice based on how the collective passion of the team could be focussed to bring about changes.	They are able to get everyone in the team involved through being persuasive and answering any questions people have with solutions.	They show initiative when they encounter problems.
	Make audiences believe in a new vision to enable them to question their own assumptions and find solutions that allow them to devise their own next steps.	They are able to question assumptions of the team and use good communication to help them imagine changes in place so they felt less at risk trying them out.	They come up with good practical ideas and ways of using them. Not afraid of going first. Always have the courage to ask questions and put their ideas forward.	If they stray from their brief it is only to make improvements on the original task. Where there is scope to be original or creative they generally are.
U nderstand goals	Develops a shared vision believing everything is possible through focussed collaboration and collective reflection. Coherent planning and structures make this a reality.	They ensure that action plans are working documents and all targets are SMART. They evaluate outcomes to ensure areas of weakness are developed.	They use implementation plans for any changes so team members have time to give their opinions. They listen to feedback and respond well to it. They are aware of the school's goals.	They stay focussed on the main goal. Planning is really good and foresees most problems before they happen. Checks their own work.
I nspire learning	Inspires critical thinking and professional knowledge. Understands the importance of truthful, balanced arguments in building a professional learning ethos.	They base their advice on sound research, carefully evaluating new ideas in education and leadership to draw logical conclusions.	They research around any topic they are working on to make sure they have considered other ways of doing it and not repeating mistakes others have made.	Good at prioritising. Always appears to be interested in work around the task and keen to explore it (even if they are secretly not really!!).
P raise positive	Strategically builds the capacity of all teams. Develops a team ethos in which criticism is taken in good faith based on sound evaluation and praise is highly valued.	Focus is 50% on getting the task done and 50% on building the capacity of the team through management, coaching, leadership and positive praise.	They are a good team player. They ask for help from others and where appropriate delegate to others respectfully.	Friendly, positive and respectful of others.

EQUIP Standards in Relation to Professional Meetings

EQUIP	Shorthand	Outstanding	Below minimum standards
E xpect the best	ES1 - Consistent approach	Regular meetings, agenda in advance, follow up actions completed before the meeting	Unprepared for the meeting, cancellations are not notified, actions from last meeting not followed up
	ES2 - Helps self-direction	Problems are pushed back where appropriate and questions used to help answer their own issue	There is a tendency to fill uncomfortable spaces with sound and respond with "I'll do that for you"
	ES3 - Resilient belief in ability	Rejects excuses and looks at how intransient problems can be addressed. Expects pre-reading and pre-prep	Accepts excuses, accepts poor preparation or that there is no option – has lost some agenda control
	ES4 - Supports well-being	Allows for a flexible third of the meeting to address concerns. Offers additional time or solutions if this begins to occupy more than a third regularly	Over empathises so that there is a fear of challenging. Gives the impression there is complicit acceptance of the role being too hard without actions to address it
Q uestion deeply	QE1 - Opening minds	Uses reasoning and evidence to persuade and open up to new possibilities e.g. by breaking problems down	Does not challenge stereotypes, negativity or "the way we have always done it" "don't broke don't fix it" (PO)
	QE2 - Explaining clearly	Use of strategic thinking. Listening carefully and framing problems with solutions	Restates the same problem without providing any clear way to progress. (FS)
	QE3 - Having pace and purpose	Fully engaged with the agenda in hand, does not allow distraction to take away from the key purpose	Personal anecdotes, slow start times, disorganisation or allowing non concise responses (GI)
	QE4 - Use of intervention	Prioritises effectively so that the meeting checks where intervention is needed	Only uses data and answers presented to them. Does not triangulate. Intervention is reactionary (II)
	QC1 - Use of Learning hooks	Is able to think outside the box. Focussed on outstanding learning as the main outcome	Pedestrian and lacking any opportunity for new thinking (I)
	QC2 - Making Connections	Ensures the work is aligned to the school and the MAT as well as the work of other projects/ departments	Some proposed actions may conflict with other areas or the priorities for this year (ML)
	QC3 - Developing HOT	Ensures both sides of an argument are explored, Follow on questions and 3 whys to check purpose	Discussion is very closed and surface with answers lacking depth being permitted without challenge. (TCR)
	QC4 - Being adaptable and flexible	Questions assumptions – takes the opposite side of the argument to test it has been considered	Allows new ideas to be closed down because of untested or unproven reasons. (QA)
U nderstand goals	UR1 - Next steps progress	Chair has a clear sense of where to go next and gets the level of challenge right	Limited sense of intentional challenge or strategy (SYC)
	UR2 - Links all work to the objectives	Focussed use of the action plan to ensure on track and re-evaluate priorities	Does not appear to know the priorities in the action plan and doesn't regularly revisit them (PDR)
	UR3 - Response to feedback	Relationship is trusting and open. Detailed challenge is expected and solutions given are followed up. Encourages two way feedback and honesty. (IF)	Reticent to tackle or challenge. Can be defensive, The Chair may even be intimidated and feel unable to follow up clear non-compliance
	UR4 - Uses exemplification	Use of strategic praise and specific examples that illustrate the desired direction of travel	Some staff are rarely celebrated and peer learning appears to not be happening (SL)
I nspire learning	IE1 - Role model learning	Professional curiosity to apply research and new ideas, sharing excitement of this (EAQ)	Chair seems afraid to admit mistakes or learn from them. May say 'I'm no good at... or bluster
	IE2 - Evaluative	Ability to develop useful measures to evaluate what is working and involve children's views in this. (EE)	May be negative about measuring before and after to see impact or reticent to ask pupil opinions
	IE3 - Open to new ideas	Maggie! Draws on a wide range of methods and ideas. Encourages staff to use multiple sources too (SO)	Over dependency on a single scheme. Pupils may be taught to a test or not challenged to develop skills
	IE4 - Uses Metacognition	Metacognition: They can use reasoning to explain how and why learning was improved (RC)	Rarely asked to reflect on how they learn well so find it hard to show you examples
P raise positive	PT1 - Establishes clear team roles	Maintains a positive pace (with a smile!) – reduces stress whilst maintaining the challenge and pace. (TR)	Either may lack pace so opportunities lost or may be stressful due to unsupported faster pace or indecision
	PT2 - Manages time and resources well	Good budget control and deployment of staff and TAs – closes down noncompliance systematically (MTT)	Has an inaccurate view of non-compliance in their team, Relatively few learning walks or book scrutiny
	PT3 - Coaching to praise strength	Knows leadership level of each member of staff and has multiple plans to develop capacity of all of them. Uses praise and opportunities strategically (BTS)	No clear plan of action for some members of staff. Limited understanding of the aspirations and skills base of staff they work with
	PT4 - Evaluation class ethos	Positive ethos is given the importance it requires. Systematically determines what is working and not and where the ethos and vision for the school and/or MAT are being eroded. Challenges and coaches (ETT)	Allows 'us and them' mentality. Is unaware of the importance of every member of staff maintaining the ethos or what to do when it is challenged

EQUIP Professional Meeting Standards Feedback Form

EQUIP	Shorthand			Key indicators	Positive	Development
E Expect the best	ES1 - Consistent approach			Professional Prompt start, high professional standards including pre-reading, agendas, actions arising and follow up. Flexible 1/3 for wellbeing and space to listen		
	ES2 - Helps self-direction					
	ES3 - Resilient belief in ability					
	ES4 - Supports well-being					
Q Question deeply	QE1 - Opening minds			Cabinet Principle Challenging questions and follow on questions to go deeper under the surface and challenge assumptions. Engaged with the vision and purpose to propose aligned suggestions		
	QE2 - Explaining					
	QE3 - pace & purpose					
	QE4 - intervention					
	QC1 - Learning					
	QC2 - Connections					
	QC3 - HOT					
	QC4 - Flexible					
U Understand goals	UR1 - Next steps progress			Reflective Clear links to the action plan priorities and progressing these Good honest reflection and learning from mistakes Use of strategic praise		
	UR2 - Links all work to the objectives					
	UR3 - Response to feedback					
	UR4 - Uses exemplification					
I Inspire learning	IE1 - Role model learning			Core Purpose Professional curiosity coupled with good evaluation skills to focus on what is working and why so this can be built on.		
	IE2 - Evaluative					
	IE3 - Open to new ideas					
	IE4 - Uses Metacognition					
P Praise positive	PT1 - Establishes clear team roles			Positive Coaching Coaching the individual and their team to build capacity. Promoting the ethos and vision and closing down non compliance		
	PT2 - Manages time and resources well					
	PT3 - Coaching to praise strength					
	PT4 - Evaluation class ethos					

Leadership Ladder ragging sheet 1-5

Prior to your first appraisal meeting fill in the Sept. column. Start with the first line and if true colour the box green then progress to the next line down. When you get to one that is not true leave it blank. No items above this should be coloured green. Fill in amber rather than green for all those boxes after the one you left a blank. Fill it in again mid way and in July.

Level	Minimum standard	Sep	Mid	Jul
1	Take personal responsibility for meeting deadlines. Responding in time so chasing is never urgent. Apologies, always sent for non-attendance			
	Actions at all times in line with the published code of conduct and in line with the full range of policy standards including AUP (acceptable use)			
	Actively promotes the ethos of the school and Trust at every opportunity			
	Always separates personal from professional			
	Trusted by colleagues to take concerns to the right confidential channel			
2	Works well in any team and is open to collaboration and feedback			
	Never walks past anything that is out of line without challenge or report			
	Maintains the cabinet principle, collectively reflects the views of their team			
	Actively coaches colleagues in all level 1 and 2 professional roles			
3	Clear vision to explain the 'why' of any policy (e.g. not because of OFSTED!)			
	Ability to deliver policies and protocols positively by relating them to the benefits. All concerns taken confidentially to someone who can change it			
	Able to propose workable solutions to problems or correctly credit colleagues and help them when they propose workable solutions			
	Understands the 'pocket guide' page of the SDP (School Development Plan)			
	Ability to identify priorities and minimise time spent on side issues			
	Professionally coaches/supports all staff towards the same level 3 standard			
4	Able to form a team around a project and agree delegation of duties/tasks			
	Actively coach & appropriately challenge all members of the teams they work in towards achieving the level 4 leadership standards			
	Shared plans drawn up and used to make sure the team achieves impact			
	Role modelling – doing yourself what you ask others to do			
	Ability to use evidence to evaluate accurately and concisely			
	Confident to have professional conversations to raise expectations of all			
5	Able to paint a compelling vision that engages a team around clear and shared goals			
	Able to take full responsibility in the eyes of the team and line managers			
	Actively challenges any divisive rifts that could create an 'us and them' between parts of the team, groups in the school or schools in the Trust			
	Sees their priority as systematically and continuously building the skills and capacity and Trust of every member of their team (absorbs blame, commonly ascribes credit to others, rarely to themselves – genuinely isn't all about them!)			
	Positive 'Engine room' for change in the teams they work in			
	Setting deadlines that are reasonable, taking workload and wellbeing into account			
	Well researched. They value established and newly forming professional knowledge in their field (learning, administration, leadership, subject etc.)			
	All implementation is through action plans agreed via collaboration (See EEF Guide)			
	Aligns actions to the goals of the school and the wider Trust			
	Actively monitors implementation. Has a clear QA system to ensure 100% of the team unite in their processes. Holds others to account when clear guidance not followed.			
	Reflective , intelligent use of data for evaluation from multiple sources to actively review and drive the use of reflection in others for continuous improvement.			

Leadership Ladder ragging sheet Level 6 (Building on 1-5)

Refer to the most up to date version of the ladder but the brief version below can be used as an effective starting point to identify development points for L6.

Level	Minimum standard	Sep	Mid	Jul
6	Trusted professional knowledge based on balanced research and always related back to the vision of the school and of the Trust. This knowledge is deep enough to strip away assumptions and really explore why any practice works in this context.			
<i>i</i>	All members of their team are being taken on a journey to develop them. Nobody is left out or assumed to not need improvement including those with great experience.			
<i>ii</i>	Powerhouse of the organisation and able to mobilise teams of level 5 leaders into common action using a framework such as the EEF guide or similar research.			
<i>iii</i>	Committed to building leadership capacity as their main role and are always focussed on at least one strategy to improve it in others			
<i>iv</i>	Understands the motivational power of praise and the demotivation of poorly evidenced praise. Praise is earned and accurate but frequent and opportunities for those with low praise are rarely missed			
<i>v</i>	Ability to select the right leadership style for the right problem. Pace setting, directed, democratic, visionary, positive, coaching			
<i>vi</i>	Ability to correctly scope out a problem so that collaboration is effective, efficient and leads to owned decision making			
<i>vii</i>	Well versed and knowledgeable in their area of expertise which may be pedagogy, ICT, finance, administration, business management or any other role.			
<i>viii</i>	Regularly builds in time for reading and research to maintain their level of professional knowledge and pass on summaries or key points to others			
<i>ix</i>	Can apply critical analysis to new ideas reducing the possibility of 'snake oil' whilst recognising the motivational need for experimentation			
<i>x</i>	Able to recommend reading, courses and material in support of others. For each piece they can explain the A(what they would adopt), B(what they would use to build on existing work) and C (what they would challenge)			
<i>xi</i>	Initiates challenging conversations when people act below expectation. The balance of nurture and challenge results in positive buy in and impact or if not, escalation.			
<i>xii</i>	Committed to service of others over self-interest. It is never 'all about them' or 'us and them'. Aware of the corrupting influence of power			

Leadership Ladder ragging sheet Level 7 (Building on 1-6)

Refer to the most up to date version of the ladder but the brief version below can be used as an effective starting point to identify development points for L7 to be read together with L1-6.

Level	Minimum standard	Sep	Mid	Jul
7	Implement whole school change in practice based on sound research and impact. The current framework we are using as guidance for achieving sustainable change is the EEF guide so will have a working knowledge of this framework. In brief this means that for level 7 there is the ability to understand the current context and SEF to set clear priorities and engage the whole school community in common purpose around these. QA systems are robust enough with very well defined processes to confirm that 100% of staff are united whilst establishing working practices look for deeper understanding and in depth reflection to achieve continuous improvement.			
<i>i</i>	Vision led. You are in no doubt about what they stand for and what direction they are heading. All decisions are explicitly tied to this vision 'Why' always precedes 'How'			
<i>ii</i>	Consistent. It is clear how each decision, change and action is consistently part of a long term vision that aligns with the values of the school and values of the Trust.			
<i>iii</i>	Matches their leadership type to the problem in hand. For example, collaborative for meaningful development, pace setting for urgent change, directive for achieving compliance, democratic for driving ownership, visionary for purpose etc.			
<i>iv</i>	Accurate analysis of priorities for school/each team taking account of their knowledge of contextual factors (see contextual factors in the EEF guide)			
<i>v</i>	Policy and practice 100% aligned as confirmed by effective QA and feedback. If this is not yet 100% they will know precisely where improvements are needed and with who. This may involve monitored use of SOPs (See the Unite section of the EEF guide)			
<i>vi</i>	Expects high standards and actively drives these with staff and students. In practice this means expecting staff and students to understand 'why' not just comply.			
<i>vii</i>	Actively invites constructive criticism avoiding defensiveness, blaming or explaining away. Has the humility to genuinely accept learning from all people's perspectives.			
<i>viii</i>	Continuous improvement by modelling active review (see reflective section of EEF) modelling a culture that rewards staff whose deep reflections lead to improvements			
<i>ix</i>	Sets clear milestones based on impact enabling being supportively held to account by being clear precisely by when, what and who will bring about this expected impact			
<i>x</i>	Systematically builds leadership capacity of others. All members of the teams they work in, are systematically supported to raise their leadership ability (or ladder level)			
<i>xi</i>	Sweats the detail. Balances the impatience for change and energy of young inexperienced staff with the cautious wisdom of experienced staff to make sure proposed changes are well planned with the right resourcing to embed the change.			
<i>xii</i>	Professional integrity. Every email, letter, action and statement if scrutinised against policy or subject to an FOI would have been subject to the correct checking steps.			
<i>xiii</i>	Budget alignment. All proposals are costed and active monitoring is done throughout the year to ensure funds are available to balance the budget and focus on priorities.			
<i>xiv</i>	Pupils as stakeholders. Has an expectation/vision of pupils playing an active leadership role so systematically looks for every opportunity to grow the leadership experience and participation of young people and engage more staff in this goal			

Leadership Ladder ragging sheet Level 8 (Building on 1-7)

Refer to the most up to date version of the ladder but the brief version below can be used as an effective starting point to identify development points for L8 to be read together with L1-7.

Level	Minimum standard	Sep	Mid	Jul
8	Shaping the development of the five-year Trust Strategic Plan. Each school retains the ownership of its values, curriculum and ethos within the wider strategic framework of the Trust. Level 8 leadership is practiced by those whose actions actively develop the strength of the whole Trust through changes that simultaneously improve the learning and operational infrastructure all the schools operate within. L8 is the expected goal of all members of TSLT and TOLT as well as being open to those outside of these groups who wish to impact on Trust wide improvement.			
<i>i</i>	Vision led. You are in no doubt about the link between proposed and current actions and the fundamental principles on which the Trust prides itself.			
<i>ii</i>	Consistent. It is clear how each decision, change and action is consistently part of the Trust five year strategic plan and this can be set out in year by year expected stages.			
<i>iii</i>	Matches their leadership type to the problem in hand. In addition to this skill at level 7, the ability to hold peers to account within a Trust in which you may be leading teams with greater experience and seniority, matching humility with determination.			
<i>iv</i>	Accurate analysis of priorities for all schools to ensure that resources and capacity can be directed where needed within the Trust collectively including sensitive assessments as to why priorities have emerged so that resource directed to a team is not wasted			
<i>v</i>	Policy and practice 100% aligned as confirmed by effective QA and feedback. If this is not yet 100% they will know precisely where improvements are needed and with who. Over an entire trust this is likely to involve the use of strategic 'Health Checks'			
<i>vi</i>	Expects high standards and actively drives all of the EQUIP expectations for all staff and on all occasions ensuring any exceptions have clear timelines for being addressed			
<i>vii</i>	Actively invites constructive criticism actively managing the role of governance across all of the LGCs and Trust board by developing best practice that can hold schools to account in place of 'us and them' tendency of governance to shift to a trust focus.			
<i>viii</i>	Continuous improvement by modelling active review towards a progressively more unified Trust whilst ensuring that the individual nature of each school can thrive (see reflective section of EEF)			
<i>ix</i>	Sets clear milestones based on impact enabling the Trust Board to demonstrate collective progress against its five year strategic plan for the Trust as a whole			
<i>x</i>	Systematically builds leadership capacity of others. All members of TSLT and TOLT are assisted in actively building their leadership capacity though collaborative support and coaching that they are offered even if they themselves are already at L8 or higher.			
<i>xi</i>	Sweats the detail. Balances the interface of TOLT and TSLT and the demands of both by having equal understanding of the operations and vision of each so that all elements of school and trust management can benefit from integration.			
<i>xii</i>	Professional integrity and system leadership. Active development of the professional reputation of the Trust and all elements of the narrative provided to parents, outside agencies and other Trusts.			
<i>xiii</i>	Budget alignment. Trust level understanding of financial allocation and budget.			
<i>xiv</i>	Stakeholders. Has an expectation/vision of pupils, parents and community playing an active leadership role so systematically creates opportunities for this.			

Appendix 1 – Psychological Safety Hierarchy of Needs

Building upon Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, Heidi Pickett recognises that in addition to the basic physiological and safety needs, people require a supportive and nurturing environment to thrive. Psychological safety, according to Heidi, refers to the sense of trust, openness, and mutual respect within social and professional settings. By incorporating psychological safety into the hierarchy, she underscores the importance of creating environments that foster psychological well-being, allowing people to reach their full potential by experiencing a sense of belonging, self-expression, and autonomy.

