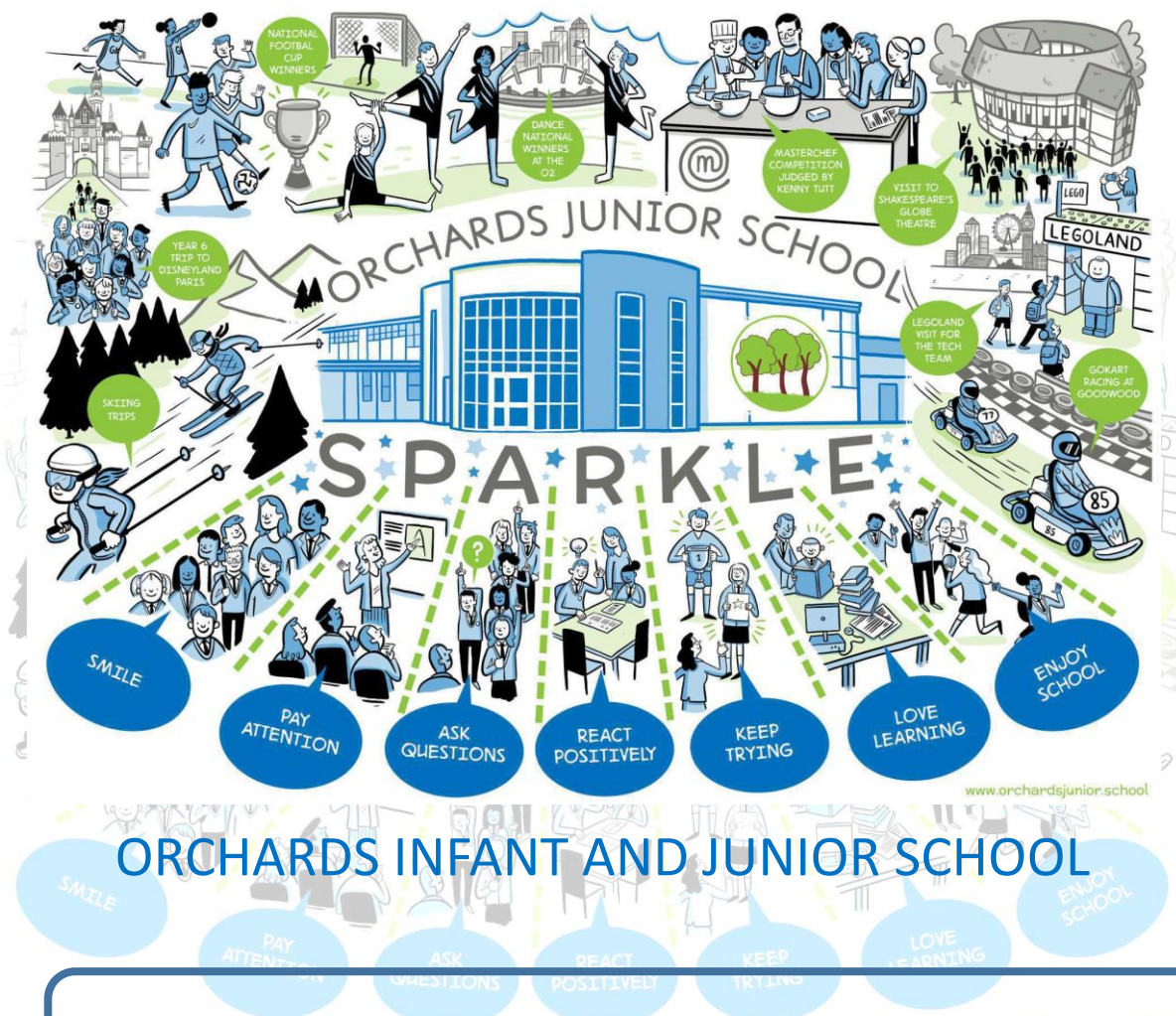


SPARKLE MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



ORCHARDS INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL

POLICY FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

REVIEWED SEPTEMBER 2026

DEVELOPING GREAT TEACHERS

Developing great teachers is Orchards Infant and Junior School's professional growth policy that puts improving and maintaining the highest quality of teaching at the very heart of the process. It focuses on genuinely continuous professional development.

INTRODUCTION

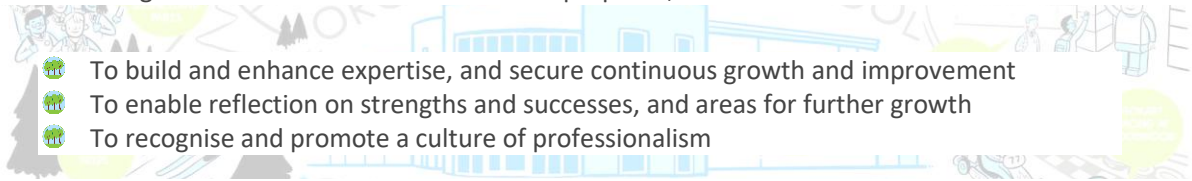
The challenge to us all within the Orchards is to always improve, to always get better; to continually grow. We promote teacher well-being in order to unlock the skill, passion and discretionary effort that exists within our teachers. Therefore, our professional growth processes exist to ensure that our teachers are able to be the very best they can be. This in turn leads to improved organisational performance as seen in improved outcomes for our children.

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent approach to the development of our teachers and our expectations in terms of the high standards to which all our teachers aspire. It is a policy based on professional trust. It is assumed therefore, unless evidence suggests otherwise, that Orchards Infant and Junior School teachers are meeting the Teachers' Standards.

PURPOSE

Our 'Professional Growth' policy outlines the approach that we take to help our teachers to become the very best version of themselves; supporting them to make the next steps but also creating a culture that encourages them to stay and grow with us.

Professional growth within the school has several purposes;

- 
-  To build and enhance expertise, and secure continuous growth and improvement
 -  To enable reflection on strengths and successes, and areas for further growth
 -  To recognise and promote a culture of professionalism

Effective professional development is a core part of securing effective teaching. It requires a desire and willingness to continually improve with a shared commitment for teachers to support one another to develop so that our students benefit from the highest quality teaching. We cannot achieve this level of professional learning alone. This policy is designed to change the way we view accountability and professional development. It is a process that requires a commitment from all teachers to active practical and cognitive engagement in order to seek further growth in professional knowledge that provides solutions to the issues we face as teachers. Professional growth in the Orchards Infant and Junior School is 'done by' not 'done to' our teachers.

We have a sense of belief and pride that we can be the very best, driven by a sense of moral purpose and a desire to continuously improve. **We regard professional development as a key driver not only of staff development, but also of recruitment, retention, well-being, and school improvement. There can be no improvement without the teacher.**

Our professional growth policy outlines the approach that we will take to help our teachers to become the very best version of themselves; supporting them to make the next steps in their careers but also creating a culture that encourages them to stay and grow with us in the Orchards Infant and Junior School.

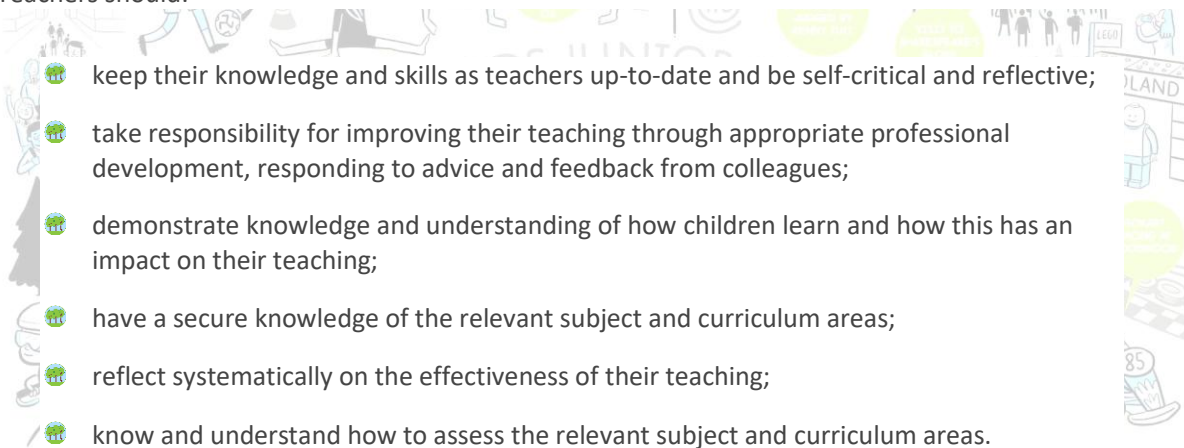
CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Effective, and genuinely continuous, professional growth...

-  has a focus on improving outcomes for children
-  builds and enhances knowledge and expertise to bring about changes in practice
-  focuses on what works, challenges existing assumptions and is, therefore, evidence-informed
-  involves collaboration with colleagues and peer support
-  is sustained over time and includes frequent opportunities for learning; experimentation and practice, reflection and evaluation, honest frequent feedback and solutions-focused coaching.

The education of our children is our first concern, and we are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. The Teachers' Standards define the minimum level of practice expected of teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status (QTS). The Teachers' Standards also set out a number of expectations about professional growth.

Teachers should:

- 
-  keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and be self-critical and reflective;
 -  take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues;
 -  demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how children learn and how this has an impact on their teaching;
 -  have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject and curriculum areas;
 -  reflect systematically on the effectiveness of their teaching;
 -  know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas.

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

Professional growth involves effective reflection. Within the school the Teachers' Standards form our benchmark for reflection, review and evaluation in order to ensure that our teachers identify areas for further growth and continue to develop their level of competence. As a solutions-focused school, we need to ensure our practices focus on solutions, not problems, on finding answers within our colleagues rather than having imposed, often superficial, targets which all too often become forgotten. We also need to ensure that we help our teachers build on their strengths first before they start fixing their weaknesses. The evidence we use to reflect on performance and development will not be solely based on data or a small number of lesson observations. We are committed to developing a professional culture which drives quality assurance from within; an enabling process rather than an imposed top down process.

EVALUATING YOUR PROGRESS

The Orchards encourages a culture in which all teachers take personal responsibility for improving their practice through appropriate professional development. Professional growth will be linked to school

improvement priorities and to the on-going professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers and, of course, the students they teach.

As long as teachers continue to meet the Teachers' Standards and engage in the process of professional growth, pay progression will be automatic. We expect teachers to progress up the pay scale as the norm. In order for our process of professional growth to be successfully completed the following criteria need to be addressed:

-  Teachers will reflect on their successes, strengths and areas for further growth against the Teachers' Standards. There is no RAG rating but a personal scaling exercise for each standard. Use the scale after each standard to reflect on how well you are doing against each standard and, most importantly, what you might do next to become even better. This can then be shared as a prompt for the discussion and possible goal setting.
-  Reflection on the Teachers' Standards at the start of the cycle will help to better establish an individual focus for professional growth which is then further detailed in the professional growth plan. Each teacher, therefore, needs to carefully reflect on their current context, standards and practice to ascertain the most impactful development focus. The focus will be then be discussed and established with the support of the teacher's line manager.
-  To aid this discussion and the establishment of a challenging focus a script is recommended for use by line managers. This discussion will take place in the first half term of the year – focus is then sustained over a significant amount of time and all staff are required to engage in opportunities for learning and experimentation, reflection and evaluation, feedback and coaching. It is intended that professional growth and learning, rather than just being confined to meetings in specific times and places, will become embedded into teachers' everyday work practices.
-  Teachers will regularly reflect on their progress of the professional growth plan as they design lessons to purposely practise the focus of their ongoing learning and subsequently reflect on the effectiveness of any changes in practice.
-  All staff are also required to engage fully with any whole school professional growth priorities.
-  In addition, all staff will look to develop their leadership skills and qualities through a focused leadership development activity.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

What knowledge and skills do we need to address the learning needs of our students?

In order for our teachers to answer this question, they need to take control of their own professional learning and plan for how they will meet the needs of their children.

For professional growth to be truly continuous and sustained over time, each teacher formulates a 'professional growth plan' This requires each teacher to reflect on current practice and subsequently build their expertise through sustained focused inquiry and frequent purposeful practice. Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are not required to undertake this task as they have a separate programme of support and development.

This individual and unique plan will identify what we hope we will learn or do differently, and the approaches to achieve this; content and process. The professional growth plans also require our teachers to identify the possible impact of their work on childrens' outcomes although it is recognised that in the complex process of teacher growth, impact on students' outcomes is difficult to directly correlate.

Nonetheless, this policy is built on the assumption that changing a teacher's practice will change the students' learning experiences and therefore impact their outcomes. **Improvement in children's' learning is the central purpose of the process.**

In the professional growth plan a clear goal is set by each teacher – a focus on what to change or develop further with intended impact. We value the importance of autonomy and choice in the focus of each individual's development and we understand that providing staff with opportunities to substantially affect and direct their own goals, practice and inquiry is a powerful motivator. Our professional learning must be driven by an individual's motivation to become even better rather than being told what to do. Those teachers who set and monitor their own goals are those who will continue to grow as professionals. We will, therefore, provide effective training, opportunities and time that will give our teachers the chance to work on a focus of their choosing that positively affects the students they teach.

The professional growth plan is a live document and the expectation is that is reflected on and referred to frequently, adjusted where appropriate, but it always forms the basis of our continuous professional growth. A major part of our professional learning is trying out things in practice. Teachers are therefore expected and encouraged to purposefully practise. To ensure that growth is continuous and progress ensured, our teachers are expected to engage also with professional support.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Professional support will be available for all of our teachers so that they can continue to grow and develop. This support can take many forms; dialogue, conversations and co-planning, mentoring and coaching, analysis, feedback and observation. Our teachers are therefore expected to create partnerships with others, including those with expertise, to support their professional learning and generate information about their progress so that they can monitor and adapt their learning. Teachers are expected to support and assist colleagues through structured opportunities to reflect by reviewing progress and helping the teacher to consider the effectiveness of their practice. The role of any member of staff when supporting a colleague is to push and challenge their thinking so that each teacher becomes an adaptive expert who is capable of continually growing; reflecting on, and expanding, the depth and breadth of their classroom expertise. Our teachers are encouraged to seek feedback from multiple viewpoints.

Feedback

Providing people with feedback on how they are doing against their goals increases the chances of those goals being reached. Any feedback for the teacher should therefore focus on the agreed development area and should be provided as soon as possible after any support or visit has taken place. Feedback from classroom observation should be feedback as information and where possible, and appropriate, be non-judgemental. The subsequent conversation is where the learning and action should take place and this structured professional dialogue focuses on the further development of an area of need for the teacher and/or their children. These conversations will be challenging yet respectful dialogue about improvement. Therefore, during this conversation the teacher and the coach will always identify a next step; as feedback without goal setting, is just information.

Observation

Lesson observations are not individually graded and will not be used as a single indicator of performance or as a single indicator for assessing whether the Teachers' Standards have been met. However, feedback from observing and being observed are essential to growing great teachers. Consequently lesson observation within the school has two main purposes:

1. To help the teacher you are observing become even better
2. To learn from the teacher you are observing

ECTs and those teachers receiving additional support will receive more professional support to enable more rapid growth. An individual teacher is free to request additional support to receive further feedback in order to support their continuing growth. All teachers are expected to support and learn from colleagues. Therefore, during the course of the year, each teacher is expected to observe a colleague with the sole focus of going to learn from them. This visit will enable each teacher to identify possible next steps in their development based on the learning gained from their colleague. Teachers should be the drivers of their own professional collaboration. Those with responsibility for curriculum development will also use professional support including classroom observations as a means of evaluating curriculum design and implementation. The length and frequency of any professional support or progress check will vary depending on specific circumstances.

UPPER PAY RANGE

The Upper Pay Range is a salary range available to qualified teachers who have been assessed as being eligible to be paid at this level. To move onto the Upper Pay Range our teachers must demonstrate that:

-  They are highly competent in all of the Teachers' Standards and have an extensive knowledge and understanding of how to use and adapt a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies.
-  They have fully engaged in the process of professional growth leading to an extensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and pedagogical developments within their relevant phase or subject.
-  Their achievements and contribution to their school are 'substantial and sustained'. We believe that as long as they have met the Teachers' Standards that they have met the 'substantial' criterion. The 'sustained' criterion should be two years or more working at this level.
-  They have the potential and commitment to undertake professional duties which make a wider contribution to their school. This will often involve working beyond their own classroom and possibly their school to guide the professional growth of other teachers. This may include the sharing of good practice, mentoring and coaching, and providing demonstration lessons for less experienced colleagues. Upper Pay range teachers are expected to promote collaboration and work effectively as a team member.

Applying for Upper Pay Range

There is no formal application process to move to the Upper Pay Range and our teachers are not required to maintain a portfolio of evidence to support their application. As it is a voluntary process, teachers should make their headteacher aware that they wish to be considered to progress on to the Upper Pay Range via their PM&D Team Leader through the initial review meeting at the beginning of the year as this facilitates effective budgeting.

Maintaining the standard

When teachers move on to the Upper Pay Range they must maintain this standard. The school will provide the support they need to be able to do this so that they continue to make a substantial and sustained contribution to the school and the development of their colleagues' skills for the benefit of all learners.

Progression within the Upper pay Range

Progression within the upper pay range will be automatic as long as our teachers continue to fully meet the Teachers' Standards, engage in the process of professional growth, and sustain a substantial and wider contribution to the school. We expect teachers to progress up the pay scale as the norm.

The challenge to us all within the Orchards Infant and Junior School is to always improve, to always get better; to continually grow as great teachers.

