



Minerva
Learning Trust

Quality Assurance Policy and Principles

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1. Changes to this edition

First edition.

2. Purpose

Strong curriculum design and teaching and learning should be underpinned by a rigorous Quality Assurance (QA) system which will systematically review our provision to maintain and improve quality, equity and efficiency. Poor teaching must not be a barrier to students' learning and therefore should be rigorously monitored and evaluated.

Whilst the facilitation and frequency of quality assurance mechanisms might vary across our schools, our one common objective is to drive developments and improvements in all aspects of curriculum and teaching and learning – with the ultimate goal of supporting the best outcomes for learners within the Minerva family.

We believe that checks of curriculum intent, via a 'Deep Dive' and other such approaches, must sit hand in hand with checks of curriculum implementation and that there should be a common understanding around the effective implementation of our Minerva Teaching and Learning principles. As well as a strong curriculum (what we teach), there should be a common understanding that the implementation of our Minerva Teaching and Learning Principles (how we teach it), are key to observations and feedback. This will, in turn, support all learners' progress in our classrooms.

This policy sets out how Trust schools will quality assure the quality of their education provision.

3. Aims

Our quality assurance processes are designed to be used by senior leaders (SLT) and subject leaders (SLs) in each school so that there is a consistent approach across the Trust with common language and expectations. This in turn, will enable Trust Leaders to evaluate standards, identify areas for celebration, share and/or identify areas that need development and broker the appropriate support. This Trust level understanding can drive support plans and inform cross school collaboration to ensure the highest standards of curriculum intent and implementation. This will ensure outstanding provision and outcomes for all our students. The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To ensure a robust quality assurance process underpins and helps support effective curriculum intent and every day teaching and learning in classrooms.
- To create and maintain an environment and code of behaviour which promotes and secures outstanding teaching, effective learning, high standards of achievement and positive behaviour and discipline.
- To enable all students to thrive in the classroom, helping them to become inquisitive and creative thinkers to and fostering a passion for lifelong learning.

- To ensure our everyday teaching and learning is underpinned by a set of research informed principles.
- To ensure we build a culture of strong continuous professional development, which fosters an environment of collaboration and which challenges all staff to be the best they can.
- To ensure that, where appropriate, remote learning is high quality, complements the curriculum offer and is quality assured by leaders in schools.

4. Links to other documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies/documentation:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Capability Policy
- Performance Development Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Curriculum Quality Assurance Policy
- Early Career Teacher Policy

5. Principles of Quality Assurance

Our Trust quality assurance systems will be conducted in line with the principles as outlined below. We believe in:

- Respectful, supportive and trusting relationships
- A shared, understanding and honest dialogues
- Supporting continuous professional development for all
- A support of innovation – risk is inherent to the process of innovation
- A strong culture of support and challenge
- A culture of 'improving' and not 'proving' and of typicality, not performance
- An evidence and impact-based approach
- A use of different data to gain a balanced view
- Absolute confidentiality

By applying the principles to all of our quality assurance, we will craft a positive, supportive and developmental culture around curriculum and lesson monitoring, ensuring that best practice can be shared and ensure that there are robust systems in place to support leaders in implementing appropriate and differentiated next steps and support as appropriate.

6. Assuring the Quality of Education

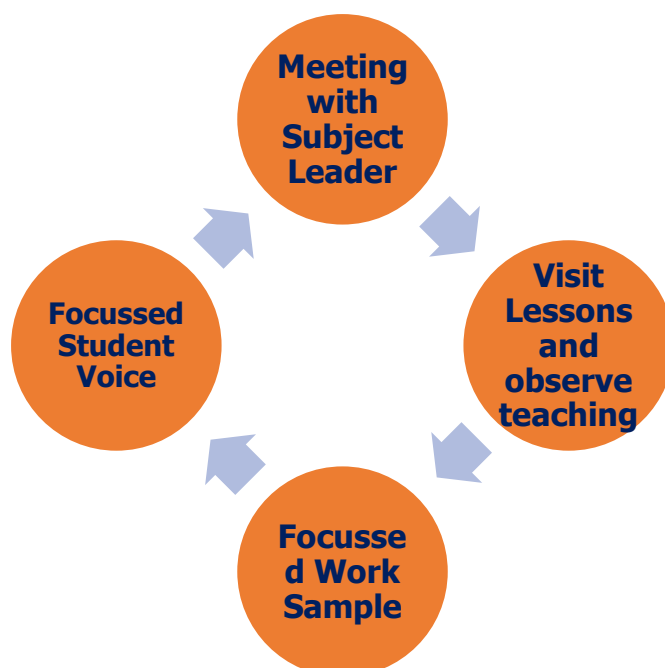
The responsibility for quality assurance lies at all levels of the organisation. Whilst the frequency of the QA exercise may change from school to school (with a minimum and maximum expected in each school), there will be common processes. These are outlined as follows:

6.1 Quality Assurance of Curriculum Intent (Design and Rationale of Curriculum)

Each school will conduct a deeper scrutiny into each subject curriculum regularly in response to need and no more than once a year. This process should be led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and supported by Middle Leaders.

The features of this deeper scrutiny process would likely include:

1. A meeting with the Subject Leader which includes an opportunity for the Subject Leader to talk through curriculum design and rationale. This is the opportunity for a professional dialogue to discuss curriculum strengths and areas for development. (Please refer to the Trust Curriculum QA Policy and Subject Leader Self-Review and Leadership Validations).
2. Monitoring the implementation of curriculum through effective pedagogy. This will mean that all teachers' lessons will be visited, and teaching observed, for a minimum of 15 minutes. Focused work samples and student voice exercises will take place. Students' books will be looked at to check the implementation of curriculum, quality and impact of feedback and to look at students' progress, challenge, inclusion and presentation.



6.2 Quality Assurance of Curriculum Implementation (Pedagogical approaches and implementation of the Minerva Teaching and Learning Principles)

Learning walks and/or lesson observations are crucial in checking for compliance with school teaching and learning priorities, ensuring development of effective teaching and learning and maintaining a professional standard.

Whilst schools may decide to conduct more frequent observations, which could be developmental and led by Middle and/or Senior Leaders, the minimum formal expectation is set out as below.

Each teaching member of staff will be observed formally, and by a more senior colleague, at least once throughout the school year as part of their professional development and to quality assure the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their classroom. There will be a common understanding that the Minerva Teaching and Learning Principles are key to observations and feedback. Schools may wish to conduct more frequent observations, and this will be set out in a school's teaching and learning and/or quality assurance policy, however colleagues should receive a maximum of three formal observations per year and a maximum of one hour in one term.

Where a colleague is an ECT, or as part of a review where there are concerns regarding the quality of teaching and learning, observations will be more frequent. Middle Leaders could also support this process but a member of the Senior Leadership team should drive the process and observe all teaching members of staff.

Senior and Middle Leaders will undergo training and review their practice to ensure they are consistent in their observations, conversations and feedback to staff. As always, the process should be focussed on driving forward colleagues' practice in the classroom.

Whilst the focus of such observation will vary by school, and will feed in with school priorities, there should be a common understanding to observe the implementation of the Minerva Teaching and Learning Principles. These should be commented on as part of the process and feedback.

A sample of exercise books/online work should be scrutinised whilst in the classroom and/or during feedback with the teacher or during a student voice activity. Where appropriate, the observer should speak to a group of students to gauge the typicality of teaching and learning.

Our Minerva Teaching & Learning Principles



Our Teaching and Learning principles are underpinned by a strong culture of continuous professional development whereby subject knowledge and behaviours for learning are strong and high expectations are constantly upheld. We collaborate, share our practice, celebrate and learn from each other every single day.

7. Other Quality Assurance Processes and Methods

As well as the above, the following school-led and Trust-wide QA processes are outlined as below:

School-Led Processes	Trust-wide Connected Activities
Everyday lesson monitoring and drop ins (where appropriate), learning walks and/or lesson observations	Data dashboard
Work Scrutiny exercises	Trust Teaching and Learning Policy and principles
School Teaching and Learning Policy (which will include details of school learning walks and other such QA)	
Feedback Policy (if not included in Teaching and Learning Policy)	Trust Remote Learning Policy
Line Management Meetings	Trust Capability Policy
Parent/Carer and Student Voice exercises	Trust Curriculum Policy
Quality Assurance Policy	CEO quality assurance visits
	Trust Improvement Partner
	Peer Review process
	Central School Improvement Team support

8. School Led Processes

Everyday Lesson monitoring and drop ins (where appropriate), learning walks and/or lesson observations

Where schools implement systems for day to day lesson drop ins these can be a useful way of gauging the typicality of Teaching and Learning and for helping to support with embedding non-negotiables. It helps support colleagues and picks up issues in a swift and timely manner. These are conducted by the Senior Leadership teams and/or Middle Leaders. The frequency and way in which these are conducted may vary per school. Further learning walks and lesson observations may also form a school's quality assurance as outlined above in 6.2

Work Scrutiny

As an addition to the above Trust-agreed QA principles, some schools may wish to conduct extra formal work scrutiny activities. This could be in a particular subject area or for a selected cohort of students. Where this happens, this should take place a maximum of three times a year.

Teaching and Learning Policy

Although there is an agreed set of Trust Quality Assurance principles and policy in place, it is expected that each school will also set out full guidance, expectations, support and next steps for QA in its own Teaching and Learning Policy. This will include further details as to frequency of school-led QA exercises and any further scrutiny, such as further work sample exercises, Teaching and Learning Group peer observations.

Feedback Policy (if not included in Teaching and Learning Policy)

With regards to the quality assurance of feedback and expectations, each school will set out full guidance, expectations and support in its Teaching and Learning Policy or in its own Feedback Policy where appropriate.

Quality Assurance of Remote Learning

As and when appropriate, the quality of remote teaching and learning will be quality assured and both Senior and Middle Leaders will oversee this. The purpose of this is to ensure that the quality and quantity of work being set is appropriate and to ensure it is meeting students' needs. A quality assurance process is also necessary to ensure colleagues working from home are delivering and setting work in line with school expectations. Each school will develop its own expectations for this; however, a Trust-wide Remote Learning Policy underpins and supports minimum expectations.

When looking at the overall quality of remote education, a three-way approach may be taken by reviewers. This might include visiting an online lesson to look at curriculum intent and implementation, conducting a work scrutiny exercise and conducting a student voice exercise with the same group of students.

Line Management Meetings

All Middle and Senior leaders meet staff who they line manage on a regular basis to support and challenge them in their duties and responsibilities. The frequency of these meetings will vary per school and per subject, depending on circumstance. Teaching and Learning is a standard agenda item at all line management meetings in our schools.

Subject leaders may also have calendared RAP meetings with SLT links – the focus of which are often on a specific cohort of students, but which will also likely allow for any teaching and learning concerns which arise to be discussed. Meeting notes are recorded and shared.

Parent/Carer and Student Voice exercises

A wide range of formal and informal methods are used to evaluate parental and student views concerning teaching and learning.

9. Trust-wide Processes

Performance Development Policy

All teaching and support staff undergo a process of Performance Development annually and in line with the Trust Performance Development Policy. Ambitions may feed into, or be inspired by, school and/or Trust development plans but ultimately should allow staff to focus on specific areas of practice they identify as wanting to improve. In order to have a successful performance review, staff are expected to engage positively and proactively with the process.

Trust Quality Assurance and Teaching and Learning Policy and Principles

The quality assurance of teaching and learning will be set out in the Trust Quality Assurance Policy (this document) and the Trust Teaching and Learning Policy. These policies will set out expectations regarding our principles and approach.

Trust Remote Learning Policy

As above, each school will set out its minimum expectations with regards to remote teaching and learning but this will also be supported by a Trust-wide policy. The purpose of this is to ensure all of our schools meet the statutory obligations and expectations as set out in the Department for Education's Remote Education Expectations (2020).

Trust Curriculum Policy

A Trust Curriculum Policy sets out how curriculum is quality assured. Subject Leaders within schools are responsible for ensuring curriculum plans are having impact and further guidance and policy on the quality assurance of curriculum can be found in this documentation.

Trust Capability Policy

Where there is a concern regarding the quality of teaching and learning, a Trust Capability Policy is in place to support schools with next steps. This policy details support available and gives a framework as to how these next steps should be led.

Trust Quality Assurance visits

Each school will have three annual visits from the Trust CEO or Executive Director of Education. The purpose of the visits is to provide challenge and support to the Headteacher and the school. The visit will involve a discussion with the Headteacher and/or members of the Senior Leadership Teams and a learning walk around the school building.

Trust Improvement Partner

Each school will have two annual visits from our Trust Improvement Partner (TIP) who is external to the Trust. The purpose of the visit is to provide support and challenge to the school. The CEO and Headteachers may wish to ask the TIP to focus on a particular line of enquiry, for example where outcomes and/or teaching and learning need improving or where leaders are needing validation.

Peer Review Process

The Trust-led Peer Reviews take place once a year and are led by the TIP, Heads, Senior Leaders and Leaders from across all schools. The purpose of the visit is to provide support and challenge to the school based upon agreed lines of enquiry, for example; where outcomes and/or teaching and learning need improving, the process will focus around this area. The process will be supportive and collaborative.

Central School Improvement Team support

The Central School Improvement Team are primarily based to challenge and support schools and their thinking. They will provide targeted and bespoke support to schools and will help develop and lead the development of strategic policies and practice across the Trust. As well as this, they will identify best practice and facilitate school to school support where necessary and provide coaching and mentoring in their areas of expertise, as per the needs of the school and/or Trust wide priorities.

The frequency of visits will be dependent on need.

10. Professional Development

Teaching and learning is at the heart of everything we do, every day and in every classroom across our schools. Our ethos is for all teachers to 'improve' and not 'prove' and for all practitioners to have a relentless drive to continuously improve their practice. A strong culture of continuous professional development and collaboration, both within individual schools and across all schools, helps to drive this mission.

As our team of Minerva Leaders in Education grows, we anticipate more and more colleagues opting to work with a MLE and that this programme will support the ever-growing positive culture around teaching and learning.

Where concerns regarding the quality of curriculum and teaching and learning remain, a supportive and developmental approach will be taken with the guidance advice of the line manager. In this initial conversation, concerns will be outlined to ensure transparency and to ensure appropriate support can be put into place. Support may include mentoring and accessing the wealth of CPD on offer, both within schools and across schools. If concerns continue, the Trust Capability Policy will support next steps.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust Board will monitor the outcomes and impact of the Quality Assurance Policy review process on a regular basis through reports from senior leaders and consider evidence collated about the completion of the process, development accessed, equality impact and evaluation of impact on the delivery of services.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust will carry out Equality Impact Assessments in order to ensure that policies, procedures and practices cater for individuals who share protected characteristics in relation to the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that all policies, procedures and practices within the organisation are fair to all. If unfairness is highlighted, the assessment will also seek to show how this can be changed and, where it can't be changed, how it can be improved.