



Transforming Lives
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Quality Assurance Policy

September 2023



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1 – The TLET Way

Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET) is a family of academies. Every TLET policy is rooted in and reflects our ambitions for pupils, students and wider stakeholders alike. Our ambitions are to **Nurture Potential, Inspire Community and Deliver Excellence**.

OUR AMBITIONS -

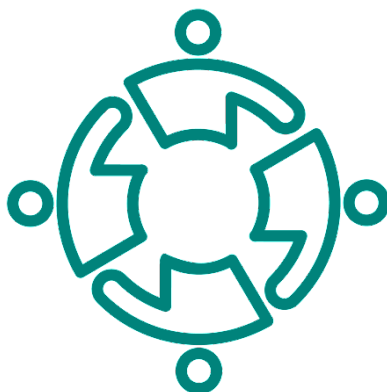
As a Trust family, our shared ambitions drive everything we do, we call this ‘The TLET Way’.

Through the transformative values of courage, kindness and loyalty, together we:



NURTURE POTENTIAL

We flourish in the places we create together.



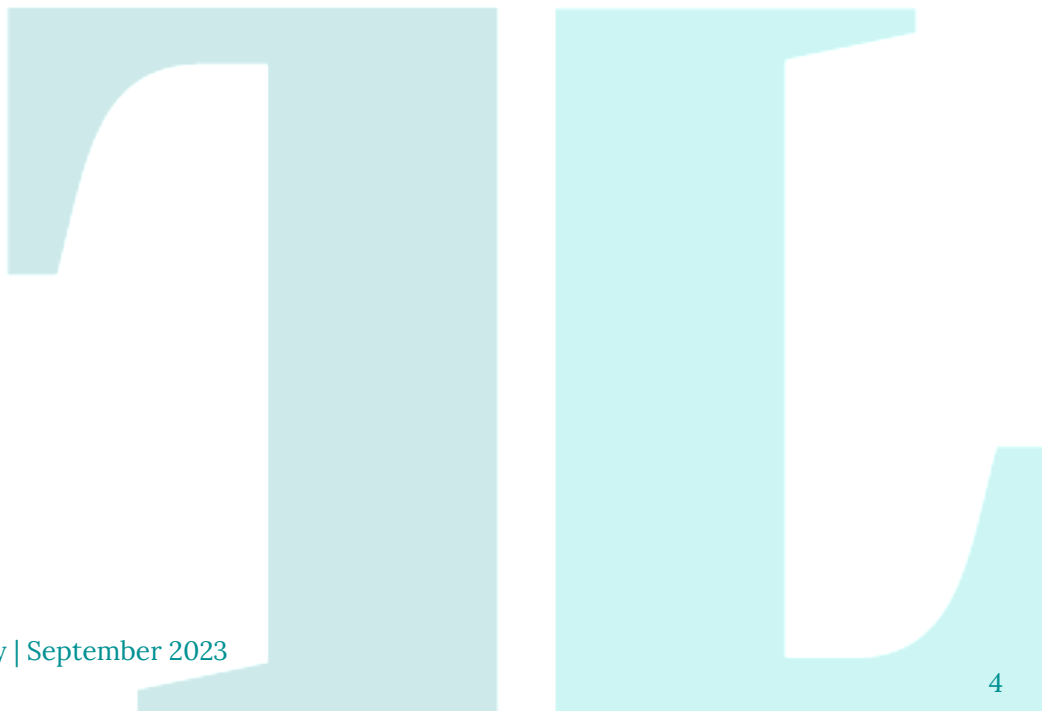
INSPIRE COMMUNITY

We champion each other to make a difference.



DELIVER EXCELLENCE

We strive to achieve our best.



2 – Definition of Terms

Reviewers- individuals who undertake quality assurance activity, e.g. leaders, LGB partners, trustees, inspectors, etc.

Pupils- any child or young person who attends an academy in the Trust.

Support Staff- all employees who are not employed by the Trust, including the Principal.

The Trust- Transforming Lives Educational Trust.

3 – Rationale and Statutory Requirements

- 3.1 We know that great schools are relentless in their drive to improve. TLET strongly believes that all our academies can improve further, regardless of their annual results profile or latest Ofsted judgment. We know ourselves; we know our academies and we know what we do well and what we need to do to improve. A rigorous trust-wide quality assurance framework and schedule means that we can utilise all the evidence of school performance to provide a realistic and rounded evaluation of an academy's current position, its potential risks, and where development is needed. This policy is also a response to Part 3, Section 3.1 of the Academies Trust Handbook (September 2022) that states "All academy trusts must have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that its financial and non-financial controls and risk management procedures are operating effectively."

4 – Scope

This policy refers to..... (Tick as appropriate)

Parents/Carers		Trustees	✓
Employees	✓	Volunteers	
Pupils/Students		Visitors	
Governors	✓	Community	

5 – Principles

- 5.1 Quality assurance involves the systematic review of educational programmes and processes to maintain and improve their quality, equity and efficiency. While the design of quality assurance mechanisms (tools, processes and reviewers) varies across national contexts, their common objective is to improve teaching and learning – with the ultimate goal to support the best outcomes for learners.
- 5.2 Quality assurance approaches can include mechanisms that are external and internal to schools. External mechanisms may include national or regional school evaluations and/or large-scale pupil assessments. Internal mechanisms may include school self-evaluation, staff appraisal and classroom-based pupil assessments. These mechanisms have different but complementary purposes. Ideally, they are part of a

coherent, integrated system, with the different mechanisms supporting and reinforcing each other. This kind of productive synergy can ensure a clear focus on academy development, providing data on aspects such as climate and the well-being of all members of the academy community, effective teaching and learning, and the impact of innovations.

5.3 Quality assurance is important for accountability as well as to support ongoing development of the Trust's academies and of teaching and learning. Well-functioning systems have mechanisms to support and balance vertical and horizontal, internal and external accountability. Quality assurance that is focused on development supports our academies to adapt to the changing needs of learners. The focus is not only on improvement but also innovation – that is, the development or experimental testing of approaches in different contexts – to support quality, equity and efficiency. Approaches to quality assurance may need to be adapted over time to better meet needs for feedback and decision-making across systems.

5.4 The key principles therefore are that our quality assurance cycle is:

- comprehensive, consistent and accurate;
 - efficient, transparent and understood by range of audiences;
 - based on effective and sensible use of evidence;
 - evaluates performance around all aspects of the quality of education and experience in schools
 - is not onerous and does not significantly increase workload
 - shares responsibility among all staff;
- Above all it leads to actions that improve provision, experience, and outcomes for all pupils.

5.5 The Eight Guiding Principles

5.5.1 COHERENCE

DEFINITION:

Systems should strive over time to achieve balance and coherence across different mechanisms that have been developed to meet the demands and expectations of stakeholders working within our academies and in the wider school education system.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- Quality assurance approaches will encompass a range of mechanisms (tools, processes and reviewers) to monitor overall performance, policy implementation, academy and staff effectiveness, and individual pupil outcomes;
- External mechanisms provide data important for policy-level decisions and resource allocation, while internal evaluations provide more detailed and timely data to support teaching and learning;
- Academies and external institutions and reviewers should work together to establish the focus for academy improvement;
- Policymakers and practitioners will need to gather data appropriate to their level of decision-making and use this to complement and reinforce respective areas of concern, e.g. links between inspection and self-evaluation;
- Approaches should aim to avoid narrowly defined criteria and standards as well as a tight coherence of mechanisms in order to provide room for innovative approaches, e.g. balance of quantitative and qualitative measures.

5.5.2 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

DEFINITION: Quality assurance policies should support professional learning communities to make best use of quality assurance data for academy and system development with the ultimate goal of ensuring the best learning opportunities for all learners.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- Professional learning and attention should be given to the development of staff as part of quality assurance processes;
- Internal and external quality assurance data will be used to track policy implementation and impact and to identify areas for academy and staff development (collaboratively wherever possible);

- Professional learning communities provide an opportunity for staff and colleagues to define, interpret and reflect on quality assurance data and to adjust strategies and/or practices to better meet identified needs;
- Professional learning communities should focus on pupil learning (rather than teaching) in order to establish a shared understanding of data, and to hold themselves to account for improvements;
- It is important to reflect on the roles, attitudes and perspectives of those evaluating academy improvement (external and internal reviewers) as well as the way they are selected and evaluated themselves, and the way they interact with others so as to promote academy improvement;
- Staff appraisal frameworks will be linked to academy priorities in order to strengthen opportunities for collective professional learning.

5.5.3 TRUST AND SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

DEFINITION: Trust and respect between and among internal and external reviewers are fundamental for effective evaluation and school development.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- Responsibilities are distributed across a system of governance and academy leadership in order to ensure a more equal sharing of accountability for outcomes;
- Multi-level governance and leadership may require shifts in culture and individual mindsets that may be enhanced through mutual commitment to evaluation as a means to improve processes and outcomes – a ‘top-down’ approach to quality assurance should be avoided as a result;
- Quality assurance approaches need to strike a balance between the importance of trust between staff and colleagues and the need to verify outcomes.

5.5.4 SUPPORT INNOVATION

DEFINITION: Academy leaders and teachers need opportunities to take considered risks in order to innovate and develop. Careful attention to data on the impact of innovations, including potential unintended outcomes, is essential.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- Risk is inherent to the process of innovation so quality assurance approaches need to demonstrate in-built resilience for the complex process of change, including shared attention to quality and outcomes; openness to new ideas; open channels of communication among internal and external reviewers, and; capacity to respond quickly to identified needs;
- Monitoring and evaluation are an integral part of the innovation process, i.e. a more considered approach can be taken when attention is given to tracking data and the impact of new approaches to teaching and learning;
- The impact of innovations must be assessed and necessary adjustments made, including being alert to unintended consequences and, where necessary, to start the process again;
- This iterative approach ensures that while innovations entail risk, pupils will not be left to falter and monitoring is not left to an annual process but is ongoing;
- Academies which encourage staff to implement innovative approaches need to gather more detailed data on a regular basis to monitor impact of new methods.

5.5.5 SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND DIALOGUE

DEFINITION: Quality assurance approaches should support the development of a common language and shared understanding among internal and external reviewers that the fundamental purpose of evaluation is to support academy development and improvement.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- To be effective, quality assurance must be accessible to all stakeholders;
- A shared language of teaching and learning – focused on learner needs and progress – should be at the heart of communications among all stakeholders;
- Dialogue between academies, parents and pupils is an important part of quality assurance and it's important to avoid vocabulary which excludes any stakeholders;

- When communicating with parents, staff must be mindful of what quality assurance data cannot tell them about performance, including the limits of existing measurement technologies, which may require explanation.

5.5.6 NETWORKS

DEFINITION: Networks between Trust academies, other schools and with local and wider communities can support collective engagement, build social and intellectual capital and spark new synergies across school systems.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- Networked professional learning communities, which bring together practitioners, can incentivise pedagogical and academy development;
- Networks must have clear objectives, be well managed, and build on evidence in order to support collaboration for change;
- Collaboration networks enable innovations and improvements to evolve more quickly as more stakeholders are involved in testing and improving approaches;
- Networks also create a pool of ideas and resources and support dynamic exchange among participants;
- Multi-agency collaboration is a way to ensure inclusion and provide appropriate support for all pupils;
- Effective networks are based on key conditions, namely: consistency of values and focus; evidence-based knowledge creation (subject to robust quality assurance); rewards related to learning (e.g. support CPD); dispersed leadership and empowerment; adequate resources.

5.5.7 BUILDING CAPACITY FOR DATA

DEFINITION: Investments in building capacity of key reviewers to generate, interpret and use data, are crucial.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- Investments in the capacity-development of reviewers (?) within an academy is an important factor to ensure self-evaluation supports academy improvement;
- Investments may be in areas such as how to generate, gather and interpret data, and then to adapt strategies in areas identified for improvement;
- Academy leaders may need to develop a deeper knowledge of quality assurance processes, and how to ensure self-evaluation is used genuinely for internal accountability and academy improvement, and not just another report.

5.5.8 DIFFERENT DATA FOR BALANCED VIEW

DEFINITION: Different types of data - both quantitative and qualitative, and gathered over time - are necessary for a balanced understanding of academy development and learner progress. This data should communicate authentic narratives of academies and provide the information necessary to support decision-making both within the Trust and across school systems.

PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE:

- Multiple types of data, gathered over time, are needed to develop a well-rounded picture of academy improvement, including aspects such as well-being;
- As well as existing in parallel, qualitative data can give added meaning to quantitative data and support broader stakeholder understanding;
- Multiple measures of academy and pupil performance help to ease the high stakes associated with high-visibility academy evaluation and pupil assessments;
- Different measures allow for a variety of perspectives, provide a more accurate picture of performance and help highlight priorities;
- To ensure that measures improve validity and reliability of quality assurance, leaders should consider how to weight different mechanisms, and how to ensure that complementary measures increase synergy.

6 – Policy Statement

- 6.1 TLET is a self-improving organisation and therefore there is a need for ever greater coherence and synergy in quality assurance approaches- in particular, the effective interplay between internal and external mechanisms - in order to ensure that they best serve academy development and innovation.
- 6.2 Conditions for effective quality assurance for academy development include ensuring ownership of the process through meaningful dialogue and actions, and an opportunity for ‘out of the box’ thinking and creativity. The challenge for our Trust is to develop and sustain professional learning communities and cultures to support academy development, with an emphasis on quality improvement more than quality ‘control’.
- 6.3 In summary, the purpose of this policy is to ensure a coherent, comprehensive and efficient quality assurance cycle that underpins continuous school improvement and supports classroom teachers, school leaders, Governors, and Trustees in achieving consistently outstanding performance in all areas of school life across all TLET schools.

7 – Procedure

- 7.1 TLET and its academies use the eight guiding principles to inform and shape their quality assurance mechanisms and processes, both centralised and localised
- 7.2 The Director of Education, with the Academy Principals, will produce a central, annual calendar of trust-wide quality assurance mechanisms and activities to which TLET academies adhere. An academy’s own quality assurance calendar (see 4.3) will be aligned with this central version.
- 7.2 Mechanisms for quality assurance data collection, analysis and evaluation can be external, central (brokered or implemented by TLET) or local to the academy:

Examples of External Mechanisms	Examples of TLET Central Mechanisms	Examples of TLET Academy mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE performance tables • Regulatory visits and inspections - Ofsted, HSE, JCQ • Warwickshire LA audits eg safeguarding, GDPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge Partner quality Assurance Review • Leadership Partner (SIP) programme • TLET Health Check programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School performance data • Inspection Data Summary Report • Academy Self-Evaluation Summary (AES) • Presentation to Local Governing Body • Work sample • Classroom observations (for example, Early Careers Teachers) • Performance management • Stakeholder voice and surveys • Learning walks • Lesson drop-ins • Lesson observations • Book/work analysis • Data collections and analysis • Parent/Carer Meetings

- 7.3 The use and frequency of external, central, and local mechanisms will be proportionate and seek to strike a balance between the improvement aims of the academy and staff work/life balance and wellbeing. TLET Academy Principals will determine an Academy Quality Assurance Calendar (see Appendix 1) for each academic year, which will set out the quality assurance activities to be undertaken in the individual academy, when and by whom. Reference will also be made to the purpose of activities which will usually be linked to academy improvement priorities.
- 7.4 When determining the Quality Assurance Calendar, Principals will be mindful of the following guidance:
- 7.4.1 Pupil Data Collection
Staff will submit data on pupil outcomes routinely throughout an academic year in order to track progress and attainment against internal target setting and regional/national trends. Principals determine the frequency of data submission, but this will typically be 3 times per year for whole cohorts and up to 6 times per year for vulnerable groups identified by the academy in any one year.
- 7.4.2 Learning Walks
Learning Walks allow for a review of multiple aspects of an academy's environment, e.g. departmental, year group, key stage. Where lessons are visited as part of a Learning Walk, this will always be for less than 10 minutes and accompanied by a member of staff with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- 7.4.3 Lesson Drop-Ins
These are short observations of teaching and learning that will not last in excess of 10 minutes per teacher/group.
- 7.4.4 Stakeholder Surveys
Surveys are an effective mechanism for gathering views and opinions from a range of stakeholders including pupils, staff, parents and those in a role of governance. When administering surveys, the intent and timescales should be made clear to participants. Participation is always on a voluntary basis. Data collected from surveys should be analysed, evaluated and shared with participants in a timely manner.
- 7.4.5 Stakeholder Discussion Groups
As with surveys, when gathering stakeholder views and opinions through face-to-face discussion groups, the intent should be made clear at the time of invitation and participation is always on a voluntary basis.
- 7.4.6 Lesson Observations
Principals have a duty to evaluate the standards of teaching and learning and to ensure that proper standards of professional performance are established and maintained. Observation is one form of evidence in assessing a member of staff's progress in relation to agreed objectives and/or academy improvement priorities. The amount and type of lesson observation will depend on the individual circumstances of the member of staff and the overall needs of the academy but should reflect and be proportionate to the needs of the individual and the principle of inverse proportionality should be applied. Please see TLET Appraisal Policy for further information.
- 7.4.7 Book/Work Analysis
Analysis of pupils' work is an effective mechanism for reviewing curriculum approaches and the standard of learning over time. Books/work analysis may take place in the classroom at the time of a Learning Walk or Lesson Observation, or as a discreet activity where books/work is collected for analysis. Staff will be notified in good time before book/work analysis takes place.
- 7.4.8 Data Collection
Academies will routinely gather, collate, analyse and evaluate summative pupil performance data. This may be following internally or externally administered tests/exams.

7.4.9 Parent/Carer Meetings

Parents/Carers are vital contributors to data collection and academies will routinely meet with parents/carers of all pupils to receive information and feedback regarding the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupil progress.

7.5 Internal mechanisms for quality assurance must be developmental and supportive. The academy Quality Assurance Calendar will detail who will carry out any activities, including but not limited to:

- Senior leaders, including the Principal
- Middle leaders
- Line managers
- Visiting colleagues
- Academy Improvement Management (AIM) Board Partners
- Central Team leaders/Executive
- Trustees
-

7.6 Those involved in the process will:

- carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy;
- evaluate objectively;
- report accurately, fairly, and timely; and
- respect the confidentiality of the information gained.
-

7.7 Quality Assurance activities will always be recorded using the TLET template provided in Appendix 2.

7.8 LGB Partners are responsible for a range of quality assurance activities so that they have a collective understanding of academy performance. This, in turn, enables governors to better support and challenge the work of academy Principals, academy improvement plans and keep the Board of Trustees accurately informed about academy development. LGB's are provided with templates for their quality assurance activities. These are available via a shared Google Drive for each LGB, managed by the Clerk to the LGB.

8 – Monitoring

8.1 It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, and those to whom they delegate authority, to ensure that the principles and procedures of this policy are adhered to. The use of this policy will be subject to routine monitoring to ensure its fidelity in practice. The evidence gathered from monitoring at regular intervals shall inform any reviews and future revisions to the policy, and no later than that stated on Page 1 of this policy.

8.2 This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any individual (with due regard to their protected characteristics), and it helps to promote equality across the Trust

9 – Appendix 1- Academy Quality Assurance Calendar Template

[Insert academy logo]

TL Proud to be part of the
Transforming Lives Educational Trust

Academy Quality Assurance Calendar 20??-20?? [amend]

Date	Quality Assurance Activity	Internal or External	Department/ Cohort/ Group	QA Lead	Outcome
<i>E.g. 1st September</i>	<i>SIP</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>All Staff</i>	<i>Principal DSL</i>	
<i>E.g. 2nd September</i>	<i>Expectation Walks</i>	<i>Internal</i>		<i>HofD</i>	
<i>E.g. 3rd September</i>	<i>Single Central Register</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>All Staff (sample)</i>	<i>LGB Partners</i>	

9 – Appendix 2- Quality Assurance Activity Template*

**LGB Partner templates can be accessed via the Clerk to the LGB.*

[Insert academy logo]

Quality Assurance Activity 20??-20?? [amend]

Context of Activity:

Reviewer:

Needs Development	•	Major Strength
Needs Development	•	Major Strength
Needs Development	•	Major Strength
Needs Development	•	Major Strength

Free Flow Observation Notes:

WWW

EBI

Please make any notes specific to Areas of Excellence and links to Professional Collaboration Networks on the reverse side of the sheet.