

Quality Assurance Policy



Legislation and Guidance that inform this document

There is no legal requirement to hold a policy regarding quality assurance.

Statement of Intent

We aim to ensure that we provide the best possible learning experience for all students referred to Red Balloon and to ensure that all young people are safe in line with statutory safeguarding guidance. In order to achieve that we aim to enable all staff to monitor their own practice, constantly seeking to improve, and also expect all managers to ongoingly evaluate the quality of that element of the organisation that they are responsible for.

Responsibility for Implementation

All staff are expected to be reflective practitioners; all managers are expected to support those staff that they directly line manage to reflect upon practice and plan strategies to develop and improve practice.

Practice Guidance:

Quality assurance is achieved through the following key areas (each bullet point is expanded within the policy):

- individual staff monitoring the progress of their students and reflecting critically upon their work;
- staff with curriculum management responsibilities (eg subject leaders, curriculum coordinators) working with appropriate staff groups to evaluate the quality of provision;
- centre coordinators developing ongoing systems of self evaluation;
- centre coordinators carrying out annual performance reviews and presenting an annual report to their trustee group;

- the director of education working with centre coordinators to monitor practice;
- all staff participating in an annual performance review;
- annual questionnaires to students and parents seeking feedback on their experience;
- the director of education evaluating work across all centres and presenting an evaluative report to Group trustees;
- each centre producing an annual development plan and evaluating performance against that;
- local trustees undertaking specified roles (eg safeguarding, provision for SEND students) to monitor the quality of provision;
- evaluating wellbeing provision.

The theoretical model that underpins all Red Balloon's quality assurance work is action research. Staff and students are encouraged to work in an action research cycle:

- plan,
- do (implement the plan),
- evaluate,
- plan again in light of the evaluation - modify practice accordingly, and...
- do,
- evaluate,
- plan... ongoingly.

In some cases this model may be formalised and written up as research, most usually it is simply a way of being and practising that leads to high quality provision.

Individual staff:

All staff, regardless of their role, are expected to be reflective practitioners who learn from their experiences, and modify practice in light of that learning. We expect student voice (ie staff discussing practice / learning with students) to be a central factor in that reflection.

Staff with curriculum management responsibilities:

Staff in this group seek to ensure high quality provision through enabling those staff for whom they are responsible to share good practice and to consider and share innovations in practice. They also hold a brief for monitoring student progress (overseen by coordinators) and 'investigating' any instances where student progress is below what might reasonably be expected. That 'investigation' will always focus upon how the student or students might better be enabled to make progress rather than 'why sufficient progress has not been made'.

Centre coordinators building self evaluation into daily practice:

Centre coordinators are responsible for ensuring that a thorough, robust self evaluation (SEF) of the centre's work is available for external inspection. Self evaluation should be seen as a permanent aspect of centre work rather than a 'one off' piece of work. Through whole staff meetings, conversations with staff and effective work with staff with management responsibilities within the centre, this can be achieved. Self evaluation serves as a tool for practice development first and an informative collation of data for inspection second.

Centre coordinators reporting to trustees:

It is now a regulatory requirement that coordinators prepare and present a thorough evaluation of the work of their centre to trustees. That report will cover: attendance, student progress, attainment in external examinations (set against projected grades), wellbeing progress and data regarding the progress made by leavers. This report should enable the coordinator to reflect analytically upon the previous year, and trustees to form a picture of the quality of provision. Dialogue stimulated by the report should lead to practice development.

Director of education work with coordinators:

The director of education works throughout the year with coordinators in a supportive and evaluative role. He (current postholder) is responsible for ensuring that centre practice is constantly developing and that all centre practice is such that the judgement reached by any external inspection will be good or better in all areas.

Professional development of all staff:

Every member of staff participates in an annual cycle of performance management. Each coordinator must ensure that every member of staff has an annual review meeting. The nature of discussions at the meeting will depend upon the role undertaken by the member of staff and the accountabilities assigned to them. All teachers will be observed during the year and feedback from that/those observation(s) will be part of the performance review. Key features of all reviews will be:

- clarification of individual accountabilities and responsibilities;
- self evaluation of practice by staff member;
- feedback on practice (this should be ongoing throughout the year, hence there should be no 'surprises');
- agreement upon 'focus areas' for the coming year;
- identification of any training requirements / needs.

Annual questionnaires to students and parents:

The director of education is responsible for ensuring that online questionnaires go out to all students and parents, that data garnered is collated and fed back to coordinators and staff, and that any key issues raised are pursued.

Director of education annual report:

The director of education should consider each coordinator's annual report and produce an overarching report (to be presented to Group trustees) based upon the accumulated data.

Annual Development Plan:

Each coordinator is responsible for producing an annual SDP (school development plan). That plan will encompass any 'new' overarching aims for the organisation, but will be mainly grounded in robust evaluation of the previous year's practice in the specific centre. Mid year and end of year review of that plan fits with the action research cycle and forms a core element of the organisation's quality assurance.

Local trustee roles:

The chief executive has produced a clear outline of the range of roles that trustees might pursue and guidance as to how they might most effectively be fulfilled. Individual trustee groups will decide on local arrangements within the parameters of those guidelines. Trustees will work jointly with the directors of education and operations to ensure compliance with regulations and the provision of 'critical support' to coordinators and staff in terms of their performance.

Evaluating wellbeing provision:

Centres have developed individual ways of tracking student wellbeing. The organisation is currently considering whether a corporate tracking system should be introduced. Regardless of that decision, we intend to develop ways of evaluating wellbeing provision (counselling, arts based therapies, circle time, PSHEE, community support) and from there attempting to identify links between wellbeing development and academic progress.

Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is a core element of all practice and the responsibility of every member of staff. We seek to ensure the very highest level of practice here through:

- appointing a lead safeguarding person, and deputy, for the organisation;
- ensuring each centre has its own safeguarding lead staff;
- ensuring local trustees understand their responsibilities here (including annual monitoring of policy documents, receiving a report from the safeguarding lead, and joining with the organisation lead in auditing centre practice);
- making safeguarding a key element of induction for all staff;
- ensuring all staff are trained to appropriate levels;
- providing an annual update for all staff at the organisation's annual conference.

Policy updated Sept 2018 by Bob Sproson, Director of Education - for annual review.

